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EDITORIAL

WHO'LL FIGHT CITY HALL?

There is a mayoral primary in New York this week, as in other cities across America, but the campaign here has been singularly dull and devoid of any galvanizing discussion of local problems. Indeed, in a kind of perverse electoral miracle, the incumbent Democrat, Ed Koch, is the big favorite over Frank Barbaro, an energetic former longshoreman with progressive programs, even though during his reign crime has pullulated, the subways have become sewers for people, blacks and Hispanics have been polarized from white ethnics and the only taxpayers' revolt in town has been the generous write-offs for big landlords and corporations.

The failure of these local ills to stir up the electorate is not, we suspect, peculiar to New York. Rather, it is part of a national phenomenon that includes the disintegration of political parties as agencies of ideology and effective action, the substitution of media style for policy substance and the currently endemic Reagan Panic which, in the name of economy in government, has resulted in politicians who not only blame but victimize the victims.

Thus, Koch, once a liberal, has prospered with a conservative line and a winsome television presence. His political odyssey has taken him to the point where he easily passes as a Republican, and indeed he has entered the Republican primary. Although the Mayor calls himself a "fusion" candidate, evoking memories of the sainted Fiorello LaGuardia, he might more appropriately be labeled the *confusion* candidate, in view of the way his media magic—which features forthright stands on capital punishment, Israel's bombing of Iraq, the Ayatollah Khomeini and other bread-and-butter local issues—has served to cover his track record. In the new political age, New York, New York, might as well be Anywhere, U.S.A.

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ANTIDEMOCRATIC SCIENCE

THE NEW CORPORATE TECHNOCRATS

DAVID DICKSON AND DAVID NOBLE

Few issues in American politics are more important than the use of state power to regulate technological development. At home, rapid technological innovation has become critical to the health of the domestic economy, where such "high-tech" science-based industrial sectors as computers, semiconductors, telecommunications, aerospace and biotechnology now play the leading role once assigned textiles, steel or automobiles. Abroad, resource wars and the accelerated pace of international economic competition have underscored the importance of technological expertise in preserving international market shares.

A recent report from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development voiced an international business community consensus in declaring that "intellectual capital—scientific resources and the aptitude for technological innovation—constitutes the major asset of industrialized nations in the new modes of international competition and interdependence." Figures from the National Science Foundation bear out the observation in the American case. Between 1967 and 1977, the U.S. balance of trade surplus in manufactured goods with a high research and development content more than tripled, from $8.8 billion to $27.6 billion. Particularly significant—and crucial to understanding debates over our economic relationship with the Third World—is the large proportion of this surplus accounted for by exports to developing countries. The exchange of computers, machine tools and military equipment for petroleum and

(*Continued on Page 208*)

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LETTERS.

THE WRITERS CONGRESS, II

Somerville, Mass.

I write to express support for Franklin Folsom's plea ["Letters," *The Nation*, Aug. 22-29] for making the Writers Congress an occasion for more than parochial literary concerns. It would be a tragic folly to miss the opportunity, afforded by so large a gathering of writers, to generate some thought and action in regard to halting the arms race and the support our government gives to violently repressive regimes such as those of El Salvador and South Korea. As writers, we must ask ourselves: What can we do? What are our special possibilities? And are we using them? It will be no use talking about our "bread-and-butter" problems if meanwhile the world is swiftly heading for extinction. And such bread-and-butter problems, though important, should never be considered a higher priority than solidarity with writers (and others) elsewhere who are subject to torture and murder.

I disagree, however, with Folsom's idea that this congress should be an international one. That could be a goal for later. Right now, it seems important that American writers meet together and identify their problems, their goals and their ideals.

Denise Levertov

D.S.G.: ALIVE AND WELL, THANK YOU

Washington, D.C.

The Democratic Study Group [Saul B. Shapiro, "Whatever Became of the D.S.G.?" *The Nation*, Aug. 8-15] is dead—again? In October 1966 *The Wall Street Journal* reported:

> A dozen or more liberals . . . have become increasingly disenchanted with the role of DSG. In their view, it has lost many of the liberal credentials it once had and has become an arm of the House establishment.

Eighteen months later, Drew Pearson pronounced D.S.G. dead.

In the years since, D.S.G. has been instrumental in: reforming the seniority system; eliminating committee secrecy; giving junior members a voice in legislative decision making; changing House rules to record and disclose members' votes on amendments; cutting off funding for the war in Vietnam; abolishing the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC), and abolishing the oil depletion allowance.

There always seem to be a handful of liberals who are "disenchanted" with D.S.G. because it concentrates on the nitty-gritty, behind-the-scenes tasks required to pass legislation rather than taking on the more visible activity of advocating a liberal position on every bill that comes along. It does so because liberals who have led D.S.G. over the years know that most members—liberals as well as moderates and conservatives—vote their districts on major legislation and that, as a result, a D.S.G. recommendation would have about as much impact on members' voting behavior as does the Democratic Party Platform.

Providing members with reliable information on the contents and impact of legislation, supplying them with ammunition for debate, making sure that the liberal position gets a fair hearing and that the deck isn't stacked procedurally may not seem very glamorous but such activities have a greater impact on the outcome of legislative battles than would adding another voice to the chorous of liberal groups urging members to vote their way.

Representative William M. Brodhead
Chairman, D.S.G.

Washington, D.C.

The Nation's article on the Democratic Study Group was off base. As a former member of the House of Representatives and as a former member of the D.S.G. Executive Committee, I can assure you that D.S.G. has *not* "ceased to be a rallying point for liberal ideas."

D.S.G. and its excellent research services are two of the most important resources House liberals have at their disposal. The fact that conservatives also depend on D.S.G. as a source of information on legislative issues is a strength, not a weakness, as your intern and some of my former colleagues seem to think.

Would that more conservatives read *The Nation*.

Robert F. Drinan, S.J.

ON PATCO

Chardon, Ohio

Watching a man hauled off to jail in irons for exercising his right to strike is a bit disconcerting for a native-born son of the land of the free. It doesn't cut much mustard that the employer is Uncle Sam himself, and I don't hold truck with illegal strikes or the oath business. Nevertheless, you overlooked one factor in your editorial condemning the President for his actions against the striking controllers ["Solidarity," *The Nation*, Aug. 22-29].

Like agents of the Central Intelligence Agency or the Internal Revenue Service, air-traffic controllers are not only employed by the government, they are the government. Ask any pilot who has had a run-in with them if you doubt they can invoke the full authority of the Federal government in the discharge of their duties. As a taxpaying citizen they are all bureaucrats or government operatives to me.

From the taxpayer's perspective, the strike is an attempt by one agency to enlist the aid of another agency (the I.R.S.) to extract $804 million from innocent taxpayers by the threat of property expropriation, fines and jail sentences. In this context, Reagan becomes a knight in shining armor riding to my defense. As long as taxpayers are denied the right to strike, government employees will have to observe the same limitations. What is sauce for the goose . . .

Jim Russell

NEW YORK'S DEINSTITUTIONALIZED

New York City

The havoc wreaked by mindless deinstitutionalization [Jean Bethke Elshtain, "A Key to Unlock the Asylum," *The Nation*, May 16] has its saddest example in New York City. Our state spends 75 percent of its mental health money to care for the 22 percent of the mentally ill who are in hospitals. The remaining 78 percent are expected to survive on barely one-quarter of the mental health budget. Needless to say, many of the "hidden" costs of care are being borne by the patients themselves, all too many of whom are forced to live in the cheapest accommodations available—often Single Room Occupancy (S.R.O.) hotels—with few, if any, of the social services they need.

The situation is exacerbated because some of the neighborhoods with S.R.O.s have begun to succumb to the pressures of development. Moreover, the city's tax-abatement program actually encourages renovation of these hotels into middle-income and luxury apartment buildings—thereby eliminating affordable shelter. To make matters worse, logical community care options—such as group homes—are hostilely received by organized community groups, making it difficult to serve released patients. Hence, the failures of deinstitutionalization are not solely the fault of the state government.

Finally, follow-up of released patients is wholly inadequate; there is no formal tracking system. It is not known where these people live, what services they receive, what services they in fact need or even exactly how many of them there are. Often found wandering on the streets, they are brought to municipal hospitals. But with adult psychiatric wards operating at close to 100 percent capacity, patients can be kept an average of only eighteen days.

Mental health care will be on the right track when all institutions involved—state governments, local governments, communities and hospitals—take joint responsibility for a problem which is greater than any of them can manage alone. Until then, the lives of the mentally ill will remain enmeshed in a web of political and bureaucratic fumbling.

Harrison J. Goldin
Comptroller, City of New York

CORRECTION

William Appleman Williams is past president of the Organization of American Historians; Gerda Williams is president.

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EDITORIALS.

Labor Disarray

Three years ago, A.H. Raskin wrote in *The Nation*, "A sagging labor movement reaches Labor Day punch-drunk and programless, at war with the President and the Democratic Congressional majority it helped to elect and reeling from repeated defeats by the well-heeled, increasingly sophisticated forces of industry . . ."

A great deal has changed since Raskin wrote these words—all for the worse. We now have a Republican President, in hock to Exxon, Fluor Corporation, Bechtel Corporation, Monsanto, Emerson Electric, Weyerhauser and a host of others, who is determined to destroy organized labor. The success of Reagan's lethal purgative of supply-side economics requires the Administration to extract real-income sacrifices from the middle and working classes. Big Labor's incoherent response to this corporate agenda has been dramatically underscored in recent weeks by its less than courageous reaction to the President's decision to break one A.F.L.-C.I.O. affiliate, the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization. The summary mass firing of some 12,000 air controllers is the latest proof of a spectacular decline in the unity and power of organized labor.

A succinct analysis of the economic forces behind this decline may be found in a soon-to-be-released book edited by *Nation* political economy columnists Thomas Ferguson and Joel Rogers, titled *The Hidden Election: Politics and Economics in the 1980 Presidential Campaign* (Pantheon Books). "What the Reagan victory represents most," write Ferguson and Rogers in their lead essay, "is not critical

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realignment, but an almost equally fateful *dealignment*, the continued disintegration of those political coalitions and economic structures that have given American party politics some stability and definition during the past generation."

Today, less than 20 percent of the total American work force is organized into trade unions. From 1969 through 1979, the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers lost more than 150,000 workers, or a quarter of its membership. As a result of the activities of the Business Roundtable, a colloquium of the chief executive officers of the leading manufacturing corporations, open-shop contractors now account for some 60 percent of new construction—compared with only 30 percent in the early 1970s, the heyday of the once-powerful building-construction unions.

Even under a Democratic President, labor was unable to win passage of the crucial Labor Law Reform Act in 1979. The defeat of the bill was a catastrophe for organized labor and underscored its inability to extract concessions or support from the "party of labor."

Yet another symptom of Labor's decline has been pure and simple co-optation of its leadership into the corporate-cold-war-liberal consensus. Thus, the Council on Foreign Relations, the Trilateral Commission and the Committee on the Present Danger have no difficulty today in recruiting into their ranks top labor union leaders like Lane Kirkland (A.F.L.-C.I.O.), Sol Chaikin (International Ladies Garment Workers Union), Glenn Watts (Communications Workers of America) and Lloyd McBride (United Steelworkers of America). These men have sat on the sidelines while Jimmy Carter neo-liberals with hidden corporate agendas competed with the New Right publicist Richard Viguerie for the honor of destroying the remnants of Franklin Roosevelt's welfare state. Reagan and his crowd won (for the time being), but Reaganomics will surely fail. "Satisfaction of the military demand will generate serious strains elsewhere in the system. By 1984, it is a fair guess," write Ferguson and Rogers, "that many Northeastern cities will resemble scenes from *Clockwork Orange*—barren stretches of decaying buildings broken by oases of fortified high-rises (or well-policed 'gentrified' brownstone villages), from which the dwindling middle and upper classes peer anxiously at the chaos outside. The regional wars between the Northeast and the booming Sunbelt are sure to worsen. Capital flight will increase. Tensions between business and labor and the poor will surely rise."

In the absence of some "massive new political initiative," one that would include a labor leadership that refuses to compromise the interests of its working-class constituency, the system will simply continue its painful disintegration. "And as it does," Ferguson and Rogers conclude, "the fabric of American life will be torn, again and again, along the creases so visible in the 1980 campaign."

COMING UP

Saul B. Shapiro on defanging the Federal Trade Commission

Backing Pretoria

One of the justifications the Administration hastily cobbled up for its ill-conceived decision to resume production of the neutron bomb was that the United States must not allow the nuclear nervous Nellies in Europe to dictate its defense policies. Last week, in its veto of a resolution before the United Nations Security Council condemning South Africa's invasion of Angola, Reagan & Co. cocked a snook at our allies and most of the rest of the world. Apparently we are not going to let anyone dictate that we live up to international law.

South African apartheid wasn't directly the issue, of course, as it is in the upcoming tour of the United States by the South African rugby team [see Michael Manley's editorial], although it lies at the roots of South Africa's behavior as a nation. The issue before the council was what is technically known as "aggression"—the incursion by the armed forces of one state into the territory of another.

By quashing the United Nations' already toned-down resolution, the Administration implicitly accepted South Africa's rationale for the attack. It also gave de facto support for South Africa's illegal occupation of Namibia. South Africa, of course, would rather fight the South-West Africa Peoples Organization than switch to a U.N.-sponsored settlement. Out of its defiance of the U.N. plan for elections with Swapo's participation and eventual independence for Namibia flows South Africa's claim of the right to engage in pre-emptive strikes against Angola, using Namibian territory as a springboard.

The acting American delegate seemed to have a direct line to Pretoria on his headset. He told the Security Council that "foreign combat forces in Angola, particularly the large Cuban force, and the provision of Soviet-originated arms to Swapo" were to blame for South Africa's incursion. A Botha—any Botha—couldn't have said it better. Unfortunately, the interventionist tactics the U.S. delegate declined to condemn are precisely calculated to forestall any peaceful resolution of the Namibian troubles short of the hegemony that South Africa demands. So long as South Africa seeks to "destabilize Angola," as the Security Council resolution put it, the Cubans are sure to remain. And so long as South Africa persists in its defiance of the United Nations, Swapo guerrillas will surely resort to politics by other means.

The day before the Security Council vote, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Chester A. Crocker portrayed the United States as a strict neutral in southern Africa. "The Reagan Administration has no intention of destabilizing South Africa in order to curry favor elsewhere," he said. "Neither will we align ourselves with apartheid policies that are abhorrent to our own multiracial democracy." With a promptitude unusual for this Administration, we were treated the very next day to a definition of this bland Reaganspeak. "Neutral" means siding with South Africa, destabilizing Angola and the hell with "elsewhere." What was that catchy phrase John Foster Dulles coined? Oh yes, "immoral neutrality."

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Political Sport

New Zealand, normally a peaceable kingdom, has in recent weeks been rent by protests against a tour by the South African rugby team. Daily demonstrations involving thousands of angry people have spilled over into clashes with the police. The annual meeting of the finance ministers of the forty-four nation British Commonwealth, which was to have been held in New Zealand's capital, Auckland, was shifted to the Bahamas, not because of social unrest but in support of the very issues that have brought the people out in the streets. Even Australia's Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser, a conservative, refused to allow the plane carrying the South African team to land in Australia.

Nonetheless, the Reagan Administration made a point of inviting the South Africans to land in the United States, and has made it clear that the team will be permitted to fulfill engagements to play a series of matches in the United States, in Chicago (September 19), Albany (September 22) and Rochester, New York (September 26). The Black Caucus in Congress protested this decision, and a number of black groups have announced that they will demonstrate.

Of course, the issue involved is apartheid, the system of racial segregation, oppression and exploitation that is enforced by law and systematic terror by South Africa's white minority. The tour's defenders argue that apartheid is a political system and that politics and sport should not be mixed. Moreover, the South African government has taken several steps to ease the rigid color lines in South African sport. Finally, they point out that there is a "colored" man on the South African team.

Americans should not be misled by these arguments. One of the most difficult things to achieve in today's world is an international moral consensus, but South Africa's apartheid policies have produced such a consensus. Although the United Nations has not been able to achieve unanimity on the question of applying sanctions to South Africa, it has been unanimous in its denunciation of apartheid.

What is more, sport is one of the few areas in which it has been possible to mobilize international action against South Africa. South Africa has been barred from the Olympic Games and the World Cup—soccer's "world series." It has been expelled by an international cricket organization.

The argument that such actions are directed exclusively against racial segregation in South African sport, and thus are not political, is specious. International sport *is* political—a complex, interlocking series of governmental acts—the issuing of passports, the granting of visas, the raising of funds to finance travel and the like.

Obviously, apartheid in sport is not somehow more morally reprehensible than apartheid in the daily life of South African blacks, and thus to be singled out. The boycotts against South African athletes express the revulsion against its state-supported racism throughout the international community.

The action of the Commonwealth finance ministers is particularly instructive. In 1977, the heads of government of the Commonwealth nations held their biennial summit in London. A New Zealand team was scheduled to tour South Africa on the eve of the 1978 Commonwealth Games, a quadrennial mini-Olympics, slated to be held in Edmonton, Canada. The black Commonwealth nations made it clear that if the New Zealand rugby team toured South Africa, they would boycott the games in Edmonton.

This led to what is known as the Gleneagles agreement. During the traditional weekend retreat which is a feature of Commonwealth heads of government meetings, a special committee wrestled with the problem. Pierre Trudeau of Canada and Robert Muldoon, Prime Minister of New Zealand, met with Gen. Shehu Yara-dua, chief of staff of the military government of Nigeria, Aboud Jumbe, vice president of Tanzania, and myself. After discussing the matter over the weekend, we came up with a compromise agreement in which all Commonwealth governments would denounce apartheid and do their best to secure the isolation of South Africa in international sport. We on the black side had argued for concrete undertakings such as withholding passports to give the agreement teeth, but Muldoon argued that he could not do that because the right to a passport involved fundamental questions of individual liberty. In the end we settled for the promise of moral suasion, and the agreement was adopted by the conference as a whole.

Now, of course, Muldoon is guilty of an act of hypocrisy. The entire leadership of the Commonwealth asked him to withhold permission for the South Africans to land. No one has demanded that he cancel any New Zealander's passport, and the South Africans certainly have no inherent right to enter New Zealand; yet he stubbornly refused to act, though he did express his personal opposition to the tour. Hence the demonstrations and removal of the finance ministers' conference to the Bahamas. The Commonwealth leaders took the action they did because they recognize that any easing of color lines in athletics by South Africa is beside the point so long as the basic system of apartheid remains in place. As for the presence of a token "colored" player on the rugby team, one could as well argue that Martin Luther King Jr. should have abandoned his fight for civil rights once Jackie Robinson made it to the major leagues.

In the light of their own historical experience, Americans cannot sidestep the moral issue. There is also a practical consideration involved. Next year the Commonwealth Games will be held in Australia. The black Commonwealth nations are likely to protest New Zealand's presence in those games in view of its hospitality to the South African rugby team. Heads of Commonwealth governments will meet in Melbourne in October under a cloud that is no less ominous because it is familiar. And in 1984, when the Olympic Games are scheduled for Los Angeles, that cloud could spread there too. Morally and practically, it would be best to cancel the U.S. tour. And if the promoters will not do it, the Administration should act—as the Commonwealth countries have already done.

MICHAEL MANLEY

Michael Manley, the former Prime Minister of Jamaica, is the leader of the opposition People's National Party.

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CENTRAL AMERICA WATCH.

The French-Mexican communiqué on El Salvador of August 28 signaled one of the first cases of outright defiance on the part of allied nations to the Reagan Administration's hard-line foreign policy. It indicates the seriousness of President François Mitterrand's commitment to the positions of the Socialist International on Third World, and especially Central American, issues; the Mexicans have already demonstrated their sympathy for the Salvadoran opposition, and are apparently willing to extend it, even at the risk of souring Reagan's much-touted "honeymoon" with President José López Portillo, consummated over friendlier topics such as petroleum and immigrant labor.

A military stalemate continues in El Salvador, and the economy faces a new crisis this month, when a variety of government loans come due on the international money market. The divisions among the Christian Democrats, the small-business sector, the military and the oligarchy have been aggravated over the summer. All parties have been calling for a "political solution" to the unrest, but each wants it on its own terms. At the center of the debate lies the question of elections and mediation. Over the summer the Reagan Administration found itself obliged to emphasize its support for elections in response to international criticism of the increase in military aid. But the only Salvadoran support for the electoral plan comes from the junta—which fully controls the election machinery.

The opposition, on the other hand, has been gaining international support for a mediated settlement, which would necessarily involve some sort of dismantling or muzzling of government security forces. The French-Mexican communiqué was a key move in this direction, and there are others in the works. In June the Socialist International began to explore channels for negotiation, and the European Economic Community sent its own delegation into El Salvador to raise the questions of mediation and possible "sanctions" against U.S. "militarism." Acting Archbishop Arturo Rivera y Damas still wavers, but has recently moved in the direction of mediation, offering his services and stating his belief that at this juncture fair elections would be impossible. As countries with a strong Christian Democratic influence, such as Venezuela and Costa Rica, reconsider their support for their Salvadoran counterparts, and the Social Democrats of Western Europe press their countries to follow France's lead, the Reagan Administration can expect to find itself in an increasingly isolated position.

■ **On August 24, 249 of El Salvador's 552 officially recognized political prisoners began a mass hunger strike. Led by the Committee of Political Prisoners of El Salvador (COPPES), the fast currently involves prisoners in at least three jails. Their demands include: the cessation of torture and of police squad reprisals against their relatives, the repeal of Antisubversion Decree 507 (which denies legal counsel to a political detainee for the first 195 days of detention), the transfer of other political prisoners from clandestine jails to regular prisons (where the International Red Cross monitors their treatment) and entry into El Salvador for the United Nations' Human Rights Commission. Prominent among the strikers are José Antonio Morales Carbonell, 23, a student leader and son of junta member José Antonio Morales Erlich; Lilian Mercedes Letona, 27, a regional commander of the FMLN (the military arm of the Democratic Revolutionary Front), and Hector Bernabe Recinos, 35, head of FENASTRAS, El Salvador's largest independent labor union.**

■ Relations between El Salvador and Honduras soured briefly late in July after Salvadoran troops, backed by U.S. UH-1H helicopters, staged a seventy-two-hour incursion into Honduran territory. Refugee workers in the Honduran border towns of Valladolid and La Virtud as well as Salvadoran officers described the invasion as part of a "pincer strategy" designed to close in on Salvadoran guerrillas operating near the border area.

Over the last eighteen months, more than 30,000 Salvadoran refugees fleeing heavy fighting in El Salvador's northern provinces have crossed into Honduran territory. Twice—at the Rio Sumpul in May 1980 and at the Rio Lempa in March 1981—they were met by fire from the armies of both sides. But the operation this July 17 and 18, involving more than 500 Salvadoran soldiers, elicited a "formal and energetic protest" from the Honduran Foreign Ministry, which promised "constant and more active vigilance in the border area to prevent incidents of this kind."

The Salvadoran government promised to "study" the note of protest, but maintained that soldiers entered only territory still under dispute with Honduras after the brief war of 1969. Last spring, the two countries signed a peace treaty that left some 35 percent of the border area still contested. Salvadoran authorities have claimed that these "pockets," theoretically off-limits to the armies of both sides, serve as base camps for the guerrillas. The Organization of American States used to patrol the disputed zones, but ended its operation July 1.

Meanwhile, the State Department revealed in mid-August that twenty-one U.S. noncombat advisers are stationed in Honduras to provide training in intelligence, communications and border patrolling techniques. Six of those advisers are members of the U.S. Special Forces, who are training their Honduran counterparts in "arms interdiction." The recently verified twenty-one-member team follows on the heels of reports of two other U.S. teams of twelve and six men each who, since February 1980, have been assisting Honduran soldiers in the formation of a special border patrol company.

NEXT WEEK: BACK TO SCHOOL

Peter Stone: Teaching the "Right" Stuff
Sigmund Diamond: College Papers and McCarthyism
Sarah Nordgren and Andrea Gabriel: Adopt-a-School

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VARIATIONS.

CALVIN TRILLIN

My problem with country living began innocently enough when our well ran dry and a neighbor said some pump priming would be necessary.

"I didn't come up here to discuss economics," I said. Actually, I don't discuss economics in the city either. As it happens, I don't understand economics. There's no use revealing that, though, to every Tom, Dick and Harry who interrupts his dinner to try to get your water running, so I said, "I come up here to get away from that sort of thing." My neighbor gave me a puzzled look.

"He's talking about the water pump," my wife told me. "It needs priming."

I thought that experience might have been just a fluke—until, on a fishing trip with the same neighbor, I proudly pulled in a fish with what I thought was a major display of deep-sea angling skill, only to hear a voice behind me say, "It's just a fluke."

"This is dangerous," I said to my wife, while helping her weed the vegetable garden the next day. I had thought our problem was limited to the pump-priming ichthyologist down the road, but that morning at the post office I had overheard a farmer say that since we seemed to be in for a few days of good weather he intended to make his hay while the sun was shining. "These people are robbing me of aphorisms," I said, taking advantage of the discussion to rest for a while on my hoe. "How can I encourage the children to take advantage of opportunities by telling them to make hay while the sun shines if they think that means making hay while the sun shines?"

"Could you please keep weeding those peas while you talk," she said. "You've got a long row to hoe."

I began to look at my wife with new eyes. By that, of course, I don't mean that I actually went to a discount eye outlet, acquired two new eyes (20/20 this time), replaced my old eyes with the new ones and looked at my wife. Having to make that explanation is just the sort of thing I found troubling. What I mean is that I was worried about the possibility of my wife falling into the habit of rural literalism herself. My concern was deepened a few days later by a conversation that took place while I was in one of our apple trees, looking for an apple that was not used as a *dacha* by the local worms. "I just talked to the Murrays, and they say that the secret is picking up windfalls," my wife said.

"Windfalls?" I said. "Could it be that Jim Murray has taken over Exxon since last time I saw him? Or do the Murrays have a natural-gas operation in the back forty I didn't know about?"

"Not those kinds of windfalls," my wife said. "The apples that fall from the tree because of the wind. They're a breeding place for worms."

"There's nothing wrong with our apples," I said, reaching for a particularly plump one.

"Be careful," she said. "You may be getting yourself too far out on a limb."

"You may be getting yourself out on a limb yourself," I said to my wife at breakfast the next morning.

She looked around the room. "I'm sitting at the kitchen table," she said.

"I meant it symbolically," I said. "The way it was meant to be meant. This has got to stop. I won't have you coming in from the garden with small potatoes in your basket and saying that what you found was just small potatoes. 'Small potatoes' doesn't mean small potatoes."

"Small potatoes doesn't mean small potatoes?"

"I refuse to discuss it," I said. "The tide's in, so I'm going fishing, and I don't want to hear any encouraging talk about that fluke not being the only fish in the ocean."

"I was just going to ask why you have to leave before you finish your breakfast," she said.

"Because time and tide wait for no man," I said. "And I mean it."

Had she trapped me into saying that? Or was it possible that I was falling into the habit myself? Was I, as I waited for a bite, thinking that there were plenty of other fish in the sea? Then I had a bite—then another. I forgot about the problem until after I had returned to the dock and done my most skillful job of filleting.

"Look!" I said, holding up the carcass of one fish proudly, as my wife approached the dock. "It's nothing but skin and bones."

The shock of realizing what I had said caused me to stumble against my fish-cleaning table and knock the fillets off the dock. "Now we won't have anything for dinner," I said.

"Don't worry," my wife said. "I have other fish to fry."

"That's not right!" I shouted. "That's not what that means. It means you have something better to do."

"It can also mean that I have other fish to fry," she said. "And I do. I'll just get that other fish you caught out of the freezer. Even though it was just a fluke."

I tried to calm myself. I apologized to my wife for shouting and offered to help her pick vegetables from the garden for dinner.

"I'll try to watch my language," she said, as we stood among the peas.

"It's all right, really," I said.

"I was just going to say that tonight it seems rather slim pickings," she said. "Just about everything has gone to seed."

"Perfectly all right," I said, wandering over toward the garden shed, where some mud seemed to be caked in the eaves. I pushed at the mud with a rake, and a swarm of wasps burst out at me. I ran for the house, swatting at wasps with my hat. Inside, I suddenly had the feeling that some of them had managed to crawl up the legs of my jeans, and I tore the jeans off. My wife found me there in the kitchen, standing quietly in what the English call their smalls.

"That does it," I said. "We're going back to the city."

"Just because of a few stings?"

"Can't you see what happened?" I said. "They scared the pants off me."

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ARTICLES.

WELFARE FOR CORPORATIONS

What's Good For Chrysler is Bad for Us

MICHAEL SCHWARTZ AND GLENN YAGO

Why do Lee Iacocca, Ralph Nader, Ronald Reagan, Douglas Fraser and Edward Kennedy all support the bailout of the Chrysler Corporation? Why do liberals and conservatives alike wring their hands over the Last Days of the Auto Industry? The ranks of the left, the right and the center have closed behind the flagship of U.S. industry. Taxpayers are asked to condone the diversion of precious public revenues into corporate coffers, consumers are asked to pay inflated prices for inferior vehicles and auto workers are persuaded to accept wage, benefit and job cuts, all for the sake of rescuing the American auto industry from the consequences of its own mismanagement.

The rationale for the Chrysler bailout is simple: Market decline and bankruptcy in the auto industry will lead to plant shutdowns, unemployment, nationwide industrial decline and economic catastrophe. To avert this disaster, the United Automobile Workers has agreed to the layoff of 40 percent of its members, 13 percent wage cuts (a 25 percent drop in real wages) and major give-backs in fringe benefits at Chrysler. (General Motors, Ford and International Harvester are presently claiming that they need similar union concessions.) In the past one and a half years, the auto industry has laid off one-third of its work force, and the U.A.W. estimates that a successful rescue, based on increased automation, would cost 50 percent of auto workers their jobs. Should the rescue fail to restore the U.S. auto makers' earlier 85 percent share of the domestic market, joblessness could go even higher. Yet for all their sacrifices, the union and the Federal government get nothing in return (save the meaningless symbolism of Fraser's Chrysler board membership), and management control of investment decisions remains unchallenged.

An industrial welfare policy is emerging for our largest corporations. The Federal government has pledged $1.5 billion to rescue Chrysler; Ford, General Motors and International Harvester are next in line. Now industries such as steel and home construction are developing cases for tax subsidies. Can state governments like Michigan's, which is diverting public revenues to subsidize Chrysler, refuse other corporations that are sending out distress signals?

Meanwhile, consumers have absorbed $1,500 increases—an average 20 percent hike—in small-car prices in the past year and a decline in safety. The Reagan Administration recently persuaded Japan to curb voluntarily its auto exports to the United States. This agreement will cost American car buyers additional billions because of reduced competition, and, as even Iacocca admits, they will be buying an inferior product.

Auto executives and their creditors have framed the issue as a choice between their solution and disaster. But the choice they offer is a false one. Bankruptcy must be avoided at all costs, they say, but in return for the public subsidies needed to prevent it, they are offering employment reductions, wage cuts and higher car prices.

Actually, if Chrysler had declared bankruptcy, it might have been a boon to the union, to taxpayers and to car buyers. In its December 24, 1979, issue, *Business Week* noted that a Chrysler bankruptcy would almost certainly be filed under Chapter XI of the Federal Bankruptcy Act, which provides for continued production, a temporary exemption from all loan payments and negotiations with creditors to restructure the company. Chapter XI bankruptcies are common occurrences on the American corporate scene, and *Business Week* could predict with some confidence the outlines of a Chrysler restructuring:

§"Building only what the car market is buying," which would mean either closing factories that produce fuel-inefficient vehicles or converting them to the production of fuel-efficient ones. That would leave the Omni/Horizon plant, the K-car assembly line, the New Process Gear division, the military products division and the electronics division in operation. Chrysler would simply cease to be a "full-line" automobile manufacturer.

§"Selling off large chunks of the company," including idle or underutilized assembly lines, such as the parts division, and perhaps some profitable subsidiaries, such as Chrysler Financial Corp. This would provide capital to repay part of the corporation's debt and help finance the retooling of plants to make fuel-efficient cars.

§"Affiliating with another auto maker," probably Mitsubishi or Peugeot, both of whom already have financial ties to Chrysler. This would give Chrysler access to European or Japanese designs—thus saving development costs—and to its partner's financial resources.

§Renegotiation of debt, which would mean that Chrysler would have to repay only a portion of its $3 billion in outstanding debts.

Business Week concluded that bankruptcy "would give Iacocca a white flag under which he could hold off the company's creditors and halt interest payments while whittling

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the troubled No. 3 domestic car company down to a leaner and more viable core."

Instead, the Federal government opted for the bailout strategy, at far greater cost to government, to consumers, to auto workers and to taxpayers. The rescue plan has resulted in more idle factories than would have been the case if bankruptcy had been declared. Chrysler has shuttered its unprofitable plants, including six new ones, and raised the prices of fuel-efficient cars to cover the cost of production, debt service and maintenance of the closed plants. The high prices—which would have been unnecessary under bankruptcy—have reduced demand. As a result, Chrysler temporarily stopped K-car production last year. Thus, the rescue plan has lowered production.

The plan has also increased unemployment through temporary layoffs at profitable plants and shutdowns at other plants. These closed plants cannot be reopened until Chrysler recaptures its market share; and for that, it needs massive infusions of money for research and development of new models and for conversion of its factories to more profitable production. If Chrysler had declared bankruptcy, these now-obsolete plants would have been sold at distress prices to other companies for the manufacture of cars or other products for which there is a stronger market. Some Chrysler factories—the parts division, for example—could have been reopened almost immediately; others would have required conversion. But none would have been closed for as long a time as those that are now awaiting an improbable Chrysler recovery. Under bankruptcy, Chrysler could have run its profitable plants at full capacity.

The rescue plan involves wage and fringe-benefit concessions adding up to $1 billion a year in lost pay. These concessions drastically reduce Chrysler's costs, allowing for debt repayment and capital investment for product development and plant conversion. Since a bankrupt Chrysler would have renegotiated its debt, raised cash through selling off plants and reduced product-development costs through joint ventures, wage concessions would not have been justifiable; the workers could have insisted on union pay scales at the reopened plants as well as at those still controlled by Chrysler. (Moreover, G.M. and Ford would no longer have had grounds for demanding similar concessions from their unions.)

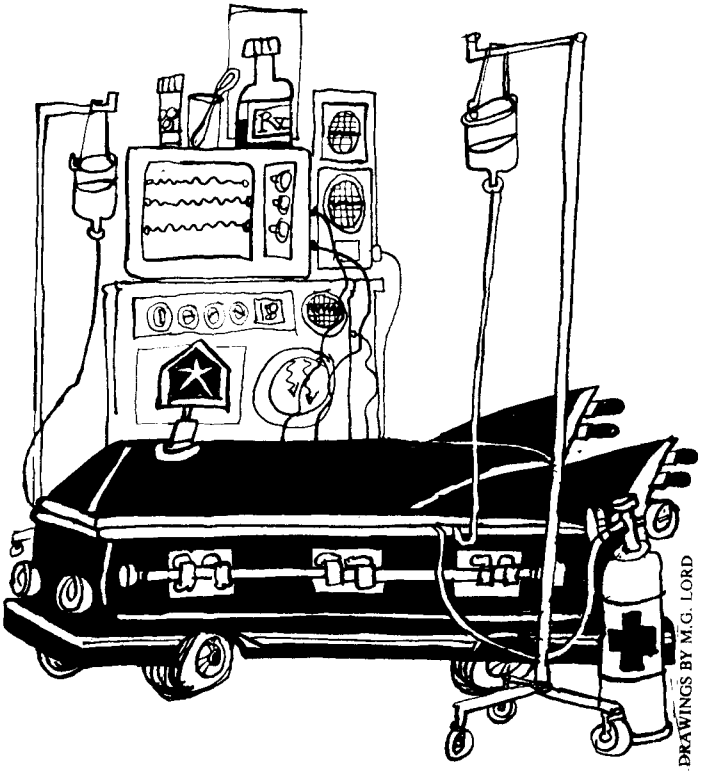
Everyone, including Iacocca and his fellow U.S. auto executives, agrees that foreign cars are better made than U.S. models [see Harley Shaiken, "Detroit Downsizes Labor," *The Nation*, October 11, 1980]. Despite the hoopla over K-cars, J-cars, X-cars and world cars, the United States is still several years behind its foreign competition. A Chrysler bankruptcy would have encouraged foreign manufacturers to produce their superior vehicles in U.S. factories purchased at low prices. Chrysler might have been coerced into assembling foreign cars in its remaining plants. In either case, the consumer would have had a better product.

U.S. manufacturers are hoping that the recent escalation of car prices will raise cash for the conversion of factories. But there has been consumer resistance, and high rebates are currently being offered to car buyers. As a result, the Big Three auto companies have been forced to trim their capital budgets and have adopted a new strategy, which the unions have supported—import controls. By limiting Japanese and other imports, the supply of cars on the market will be reduced, forcing prices up for all cars. This will prevent further erosion of the American auto producers' market share and give them time to accumulate capital and complete the technological development necessary to recapture lost sales. The price to consumers: an added $6.5 billion, according to government estimates.

The Federal government's stake is $1.5 billion in loan guarantees, but state governments are also giving away millions of dollars to Chrysler in the form of tax breaks. Under bankruptcy, no further raids on the public treasury would have occurred.

A bankrupt Chrysler would have been smaller (thus decreasing the power of its executives), its stock would have been less valuable (thus producing massive capital losses for investors) and its enormous debt would have been only partially repaid (banks have already written off 25 percent of the unguaranteed debt). None of these developments would have hurt most Americans; instead, only executives, stockholders and bankers would have suffered. It is no wonder, then, that Chrysler management has saddled the American people with a bailout-or-bust choice. Indeed, the Chrysler crisis may be a trial balloon for the entire auto industry.

What makes all this more worrisome is that it may be only the first of many such bailouts. After all, it is important to the U.S. auto makers that foreign competition be thwarted now; it would be harder, perhaps impossible, to dislodge the foreign invaders by the time the U.S. auto companies are



DRAWINGS BY M.G. LORD

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ready for re-expansion. Under this strategy, plants needed when re-expansion occurs must be retained; they cannot be sold to foreign competitors, however sensible that course might seem. To justify further government subsidies and worker sacrifices, to protect themselves from foreign competition and to secure production capacity for an anticipated re-expansion, the auto companies will continue to promote rescues, retain idle assembly lines and parts plants—and lay off workers.

What is at stake, then, is much more than the fate of the Chrysler Corporation. Ford, for example, recorded a $1.5 billion loss last year and has tripled its level of debt since 1978. Ford executives have asked for wage concessions from the U.A.W. and expressed interest in government loan guarantees. If these subsidies are refused, it is likely that Ford's Mahwah, New Jersey, plant could be reopened as a Ford-operated assembly line for Toyota. Negotiations between the two companies foundered recently because Ford would not accept Toyota's terms, but a further deterioration of Ford's financial condition might force the company to accept Toyota's offer. Ford's hope of averting the financial pressures that would lead to concessions to Toyota (and, in the process, reopen the Mahwah plant) lies in the U.A.W. wage-cut package. The union's rescue efforts are thus contributing to lower wages and higher unemployment.

Consider what has happened to American Motors. Much smaller than Chrysler or Ford, it had less political clout and was unable to wangle any Federal subsidies. Impending bankruptcy made it a cheap acquisition for Renault, which had been seeking entry into the American market. As a result, 1,600 A.M.C. dealerships have been revived as distributors of Renault cars, and the main A.M.C. manufacturing plant is scheduled to reopen in 1982 to produce a Renault-designed car. (Contrast this to the original rescue plan, which projected a minimum of three years' idleness for plant and workers.) Renault is pouring $200 million of its own money and another $200 million in borrowed capital into the development of twelve major new automotive products by 1986, and the U.A.W. contract negotiated after acquisition included a 24 percent wage increase over three years, a 36 percent increase in fringe benefits and four new paid holidays.

The American Motors-Renault joint venture was called a "shotgun wedding" by U.S. auto executives—a last resort that meant contraction, the sacrifice of autonomy and the entry of a foreign company into American auto manufacturing. But in fact, the fruits of this wedlock are reemployment, higher wages, lower prices and a better product.

The Reagan Administration, like its predecessors, seeks to cushion the crisis while promoting the fantasy that bailout measures encourage the free workings of the marketplace. On the contrary, the Chrysler experience shows that government intervention in the industry has become a fixture. The real question is, why is government intervention, whether by Democrats or Republicans, so ineffective?

Consider Chrysler's present situation. The banks have recently liquidated 50 percent of the company's debt in exchange for an equity position and a decision-making role in future investment. This reduction of debt service (which would have come earlier with bankruptcy) was what persuaded Peugeot to enter into an accord with Chrysler that calls for joint production by 1985. By avoiding bankruptcy a year ago, the banks have greater control over Chrysler, and the corporation's executives have new investment capital and security. But the government and the union got little for their sacrifices—only a greater share of Chrysler's debt, more unemployment, lower wages, higher car prices and no participation in future corporate decisions.

Such policies fail because they focus on current market behavior or individual firms without dealing with structural changes in the world economy and their consequences for U.S. industry. For example, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development has predicted a saturated market for autos by the end of the 1980s (the last time this occurred was 1925); unpredictable growth in the Third

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World makes future demand for cars uncertain; the internationalization and automation of manufacturing allows multinational companies to pursue strategies that undermine labor-market stability in the national economy, and oil prices, despite the present glut, will probably continue to rise (and no significant innovations in engines are likely).

It is especially significant that the monopoly power of large auto manufacturers has protected and nurtured unproductive, anti-innovative management. The U.S. auto industry has spawned a bloated management that is incapable of responding to change. It is a good example of economist David Gordon's argument that declining industrial productivity results from managerial inefficiency. There are eight to ten management levels between the shop floor and the chief executive officer in U.S. auto companies, compared with four to six levels in Japanese and European firms. Most technological advances in the U.S. auto industry have been concerned with the process of production (increasing automation, for example) rather than with product innovation. Since such measures fail to confront rapidly changing economic realities, corporate lobbying concentrates on preserving the status quo.

The resulting government policies secure the power of U.S. auto giants at increasing cost to the taxpayer. In addition to fiscal relief, these industry-backed measures include synthetic fuel development, protective trade legislation and the weakening or elimination of safety and environmental regulations. Antitrust investigations of the auto industry begun by the Senate, the Justice Department and the Federal Trade Commission are dead. There has been no effort to understand the corporate strategies that created the current crisis, forestalling any legislative or judicial recourse that might have resulted from such analysis.

As auto manufacturers sink deeper into crisis, selling off plants and equipment, laying off workers and grasping wildly for further concessions, consumers, auto workers and local and Federal officials should demand greater participation in corporate decisions. Jack Russell and Dan Luria, economists for the Detroit Alliance for a Rational Economy (DARE), a coalition of neighborhood activists, trade unionists and local government officials, have prepared a plan to counter current auto-industry policy. They list a number of products, ranging from cogenerating equipment and rail cars to petroleum processing and electrification equipment, that could be built in auto plants that have been shut. Joint public and private investment initiatives like these could further a rational reindustrialization policy that would reject continued dependence on past corporate failures.

As it is, the United States has been handed a reindustrialization policy that is of, by and for the industry. But corporate welfare policy based on the premise that what is good for Chrysler, Ford and G.M. is good for the country neglects the public's welfare. The lesson is that the failure of U.S. industry derives from the failure of corporate-government policies that equate the interests of the American citizen with political and economic control by large corporations. □

ISRAEL'S *PIEDS NOIRS*

The Golem on The West Bank

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

The Museum of the Potential Holocaust is situated in a modest suburban house in an overgrown garden on Jerusalem's Usishkin Street. Like the museum of the actual Holocaust at Yad Vashem, it is almost deliberately out of scale with its subject. Inside, the curious visitor can scan displays of anti-Semitic material, amateurish in their mounting and framing but relying for their effect on the images they evoke. Most of the stuff is American in origin; the usual hateful rubbish about Christ-killers and ritual murder is the main theme, together with some halting attempts at modernism in the form of anti-Zionist and pro-oil propaganda.

It's not possible to browse in this museum. At Yad Vashem there is a deep silence, and visitors must cover their heads when entering the main memorial room. But at Usishkin Street, a talking guide is obligatory. At the end of the tour he sits everybody down and asks them questions about their reactions, before delivering a homily about the evils of "the exile" and the imperative necessity for all Jews to leave the Diaspora and come to the Land of Israel. Even when he appeals for funds at the end of his talk none of the visitors will have learned from him that the Museum of the Potential Holocaust is run by Kach ("Thus")—the name given to the party of Rabbi Meir Kahane.

Kach is a small but energetic party with a gift for publicity. It recently took a full-page advertisement in the Hebrew press. The ad featured a beautiful Israeli woman soldier. "This is a daughter of Israel," read the caption (the woman in the photograph subsequently sued). "But are you certain she will marry a Jew? You are astonished? What a question! If so, you are invited to come in the evening to places like Tiberias or Acre, Beit Shean or Upper Nazareth, Haifa, Beersheba or Dimona, Tel Aviv or Jaffa and even the Holy City of Jerusalem. You are invited to come and see the Arabs that wander in the streets of the Jewish cities and court the daughters of Israel."

Having got the reader's attention in this way, the advertisement went on to propose a new law for the consideration of the Knesset. Article One ran:

> To end the epidemic of mixing and assimilation that is running rampant in the land, we propose that the ministry of education conduct compulsory lessons in all the schools in the country on the uniqueness of the people of Israel and the prohibition of the abomination of mixing and having relations with other nations.

Christopher Hitchens, who was recently in Israel, is the foreign editor of the New Statesman *and a frequent contributor to* The Nation.

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Article Two:

> To deter those who came to seduce the daughters of Israel to desecration and assimilation we propose a mandatory jail sentence of five years with no possibility of parole. This is for any non-Jew who has sexual relations with a Jewess.

Other demands of a similar nature were appended, with the final and logical appeal:

> And this is just the beginning. It is clear that the real solution is Kach's program to make the Arabs of the Land of Israel emigrate to their own lands.

The advertisement drew a storm of protest. Its similarity to the Nuremburg laws was widely noted. It was even proposed to ban Kach from the elections, as the pro-Palestinian "List of the Socialists" had been banned in 1965. Things didn't get that far, but neither did Kach, which failed to win a single seat. It was, and it remains, a numerically negligible party, though its probable involvement in the blowing up of Arab mayors has given it a certain extra "weight."

But shift the scene a few miles south, to Hebron. Here is a typical Arab town; typical except in being the site of Abraham's tomb. Rioting drove most Jews away after vicious incidents in the 1930s. But now they are back. Over Hebron, dominating the town and the Jerusalem road from a nearby commanding hillside, is the settlement of Kiryat Arba. Its windows are designed as gun slits on the outside. It is surrounded by a tall fence. Its searchlights beam down the hill. Its inhabitants carry guns and search passers-by. It is not beautiful, but it is secure and it makes itself felt. From many of its windows, and from the guardpost by the gate, flutters the yellow and black emblem, incorporating the Star of David and a clenched fist, which is the symbol of Kach.

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Kahane's portrait is exhibited on posters in the surrounding area. His support among the 4,000-odd settlers is difficult to gauge exactly, but it certainly reached an apogee in May 1980. A large crowd of Kiryat Arba residents, claiming Hebron as the second most sacred city of Judaism, were walking to prayers when they came under fire from Palestinians. Six of them died. One of them had the un-Jewish name of James E. Mahon Jr. He also had an un-Jewish background of neo-Nazi activity in the United States. Mahon, under his chosen name of Eli Hazeev ("The Wolf" in Hebrew) became Kach's first martyr. Discharged from the U.S. Army after Vietnam, with numerous physical and mental scars, he hung around the Nazi fringes in the United States (acquiring the nickname "Crazy Jimmy" from the Washington police) before suddenly converting to Judaism and going off to fight for the Holy Land.

He had already been in an Israeli prison for acts of violence against Arabs, and had appalled hardened Kiryat Arba settlers by his lust for blood and weaponry. Why not write him off as a kook? Because Gen. Rafael Eitan, Israeli Chief of Staff and public sympathizer with the Israeli ultranationalist movement Gush Emunim, spoke at his funeral, as did Chief Rabbi Schlomo Goren. And Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir. An Israeli Army detachment fired three volleys over the grave. Rabbi Kahane was released on parole from preventive detention to attend. The Arabs of Hebron, in short, were left in little doubt about which side the state was on.

This is the real point about "extremism" in Israel. It has a ratchet effect, establishing positions which later become common ground and then going on to stake out even bolder outposts. A month after the funeral of "Crazy Jimmy," Amos Elon wrote, in *Ha'aretz*, "The Golem has Overpowered its Creator." He echoed the fears of many Arabs and Jews: that the settlers propose and the state disposes.

To give one instance: until the middle of last year, an Israeli living in a settlement in the occupied territories would be mustered into the reserve military unit of his or her *original* hometown or village. When called to active duty, the settler-soldier would report to this unit. Furthermore, the unit guarding any particular settlement might come from anywhere inside Israel. Thus, the settlement of Kiryat Arba might be protected by soldiers from Tel Aviv or Haifa, but never from Kiryat Arba. Under the command of General Eitan, however, settlers were transferred from their *original* hometown or village. When called to active duty, the settler-soldier would report to this unit. Furthermore, the settlers form a coherent reserve force in the Israeli Army, accoutered with modern weaponry and disciplined by their own "force within a force." Let's assume that General Eitan knows what he is doing; his initial plan was probably to pre-empt any Labor Alignment "pullback" from the West Bank, but the result of it has been to create an embryonic Israeli Secret Army Organization.

Should this view be thought alarmist, one need only quote Gen. Haim Bar-Lev, former Chief of Staff and cabinet minister and, in the words of the old saying, no pantywaist. He called the emergence of the semi-official settler army "a

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very real threat to our democracy." And by "our" he *meant* "our." The Kach and Gush Emunim forces are quite ready to fire on fellow Jews if they try to move them, and have stated as much time and again. Last March, the Jerusalem paper *Yediot Aharonot* reported:

> Should the Israeli government decide to give up its rule over Judea and Samaria, Rabbi Meir Kahane plans to call a settlers' congress, during which the establishment of a "State of Judah" will be declared.

Now that Begin has won another term, and now that Ariel Sharon, with his known sympathy for the biblical settler element, is Defense Minister, it is improbable that any Israeli government will try to dislodge the men and women of Kiryat Arba by force. But, as former Defense Minister Ezer Weizman points out in his latest memoirs, it is dangerous under any government to treat the West Bank as if it were uninhabited. Kach and its followers claim, in the words of Yossi Dayan, that "in the end, we will find that our own positions, which you call extremist, are taken over and even exceeded by groups which consider themselves to be far more respectable than us."

As time goes by it will become more difficult for Israel to disown its lunatic fringe. On the other side of the fence, patience is wearing thin and pressures grow to break the current impasse. Under the terms of the Camp David accords, Anwar el-Sadat will regain control of the remainder of Israeli-occupied Sinai—and then he need be patient no more. □

'DEATH BY A THOUSAND CUTS'

The Dismantling Of OSHA

JAMES CRAWFORD

"If you keep pushing this, you'll end up out of a job," the inspector said. Incredulous, the union steward listened as the man from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration lectured him about the high cost of noise controls; installing them, the inspector said, might put the steward's employer, a Boston electronics firm, out of business.

Several weeks earlier, the steward had filed a complaint with OSHA after learning that workers in his department were experiencing hearing loss. Ordinarily, the chorus of punch presses steadily pounding out metal parts was amplified as it bounced off the plant's concrete walls and floor. Management's own tests had measured noise levels as high as 107 decibels—roughly equivalent to the sound of a power saw at close range, and three times as high as the law allows.

But not today. Someone had tipped off the company. When the inspector arrived, the punch press area "sounded like a library," the steward recalled. Ignoring the union rep's protests, the inspector took out his noise dosimeter and monitored the motionless machines. After he left, production resumed, and so did the workers' cynicism about the chances for health and safety improvements.

The incident illustrates a recurrent nightmare among labor officials: the use of OSHA to frustrate union efforts to improve job safety and health. President Ronald Reagan's record has so far done little to alleviate this fear. Pledging to end OSHA's "adversarial" relationship with business, the Administration has moved quickly to remold the agency in its own image.

- As his first order of business, Secretary of Labor Raymond Donovan canceled several pending standards without explanation, including a chemical labeling proposal, the Right-to-Know rule, that had been five years in the making.
- Thorne Auchter, a Florida construction executive whose family-owned company has been repeatedly cited for OSHA violations, has been appointed to head the agency.
- Alleging a "bias" toward labor in OSHA's past worker education programs, Auchter has destroyed or embargoed more than $500,000 worth of training materials produced during the Carter Administration by his predecessor, Dr. Eula Bingham.
- In line with Reagan's executive order mandating cost-benefit analysis in Federal rulemaking, OSHA's more stringent standards are being reopened for "review."

Until recently, the strategy of OSHA critics had been to transform the agency administratively—"Death by a thousand cuts," was how one labor official put it—while avoiding a major legislative confrontation. Last year, when then-Senator Richard Schweiker proposed to exempt 90 percent of workplaces from OSHA safety inspections, testimony at Congressional hearings and media attention lent force to labor's efforts to defeat the bill. The lesson was not lost on the new Administration. In its attempts to curb OSHA so far, it has provided no convenient legislative targets; instead, it has kept labor busy with dozens of regulatory skirmishes, most of them obscure to the rank and file.

But the U.S. Supreme Court's June 17 cotton-dust decision promises to alter the game plan [see Ronald Brownstein, "Making the Worker Safe for the Workplace," *The Nation*, June 6]. The ruling will handicap the Administration by disallowing the use of cost-benefit analysis to justify reduced standards of industrial hygiene. "Congress was fully aware that the Act would impose real and substantial costs of compliance on industry," wrote Justice William Brennan for the majority. But "it believed that such costs were part of the costs of doing business." The only factor limiting OSHA's mandate to protect workers, according to the Court, is the "feasibility" of achieving that protection.

Since the Court's ruling, the Department of Labor has hinted that it may ask Congress either to amend the Occupational Safety and Health Act itself or to pass a law requiring cost-benefit analysis for all Federal regulations. The latter approach was embodied in S. 1080, "regulatory reform" legislation filed by Senator Paul Laxalt, Republican of Nevada, and co-sponsored by eighty other Senators. But

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this measure, conceived before the cotton-dust decision, would apply only to regulatory statutes that explicitly permit cost-benefit analysis. Of course, amendments may be sought that would include an override of the OSH Act, the Mine Safety and Health Act, the Clean Air Act and other environmental laws. Yet the proposal of such changes might prove politically embarrassing, since the Supreme Court has put its moral authority behind "the pre-eminent value" of workers' safety and health.

The White House has indicated that it will try nonlegislative methods to circumvent the cotton-dust decision, since the Court's criterion of feasibility leaves room for applying economic considerations in OSHA standard-setting. Immediately after the decision, in fact, the Administration announced its plan to conduct "cost-effectiveness studies" of regulatory alternatives. But it is unlikely that such studies could ever be as effective as cost-benefit analyses in the Administration's battle to free industry from OSHA. To be judged infeasible on economic grounds, a regulation must practically bankrupt an entire industry—not just one or two marginal firms.

So far, no OSHA standard has flunked the economic feasibility test. In fact, compliance costs are often modest. A recent study of the chemical industry by the New York-based Council on Economic Priorities found that OSHA rules had cost, on average, only $140 per year per employee between 1972 and 1979. Meanwhile, they had prevented 88,000 illnesses and injuries among chemical workers.

Industry projections of compliance costs, however, are often grossly inflated, and they may encourage the Administration to engage in some "shenanigans," said Blair Levin, an attorney for the Brown Lung Association in North Carolina. For example, when OSHA set a standard for vinyl chloride, a known carcinogen, the plastics industry overestimated the costs of compliance by a factor of 300. "If you have an OSHA accepting those figures point-blank," Levin warned, "you're going to have weak standards."

Administration officials have seized upon fine print in the Court's ruling in order to justify reversal of a longstanding OSHA policy that has favored "engineering controls" over personal protective equipment such as respirators, rubber suits or earplugs. C. Boyden Gray, counsel to the Presidential Task Force on Regulatory Relief, has said that Footnote 32 of the decision implies that OSHA must choose "the least costly alternative" for worker protection. The passage he cited, however, refers to a choice among methods that "would achieve the same reduction in health risk." Whether or not respirators or any other personal gear can do so has long been a matter of debate.

Respirators are not only notoriously uncomfortable and difficult to breathe through, but recent testing by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) has confirmed that they also perform poorly under workplace stresses. At the request of government inspectors who had recently visited a silica flour mill in Illinois, NIOSH studied the effectiveness of the mill workers' MSA powered air-purifying respirators. Despite high marks in previous lab tests, this model, according to researchers, did not protect workers from breathing lung-scarring levels of silica dust. This was the first time NIOSH had studied any respirator under actual work conditions, and for many industrial hygienists, the results raised questions about all respirator models.

Another area in which any administration has immense discretion is that of enforcement. So far, Federal officials have indicated they will cut back on what is already a meager inspection effort. Before the Administration's budget cuts, OSHA had only enough compliance officers to visit about 1 percent of the nation's workplaces each year. The agency is cutting 300 enforcement activity positions over the next two years, and estimates that it will conduct 10 percent fewer inspections.

Reagan's appointments to the Department of Labor—the officials who will, or will not, enforce OSHA standards—have been good news for would-be OSHA violators. But large companies hardly need added incentives for foot-dragging on compliance with agency requirements. As long as their lawyers can prolong appeal proceedings (often for years), employers have no obligation to correct hazards cited by OSHA. One company that has perfected such stalling tactics is Schiavone Construction, Secretary Donovan's former employer. While he served as executive vice president, the New Jersey company was cited 135 times by OSHA over a six-year period. (Fifty-eight of the violations were "serious," i.e., they could have caused death or severe injury.) Assistant Labor Secretary Auchter is out of the same mold: His company ran up forty-eight violations from July 1972 to November 1980.

Perhaps most alarming to labor is a perceptible movement toward replacing enforcement altogether with so-called labor-management cooperation efforts like the Bechtel Plan, which takes its name from the committee that oversaw the construction of California's San Onofre nuclear plant. The Bechtel Corporation and the California Building and Construction Trades Council, a state federation of construction unions, agreed to an experiment substituting their own joint inspections for OSHA's general schedule inspections, and achieved, it is claimed, a reduction in on-the-job accidents.

The A.F.L.-C.I.O. has said that it favors such plans when

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they are feasible. But many union officials are skeptical and believe that such programs can only work with the cooperation of the rank and file; they cannot succeed when imposed by management. "There are two reasons that [the Bechtel] plan works," said Peg Seminario of the A.F.L.-C.I.O. health and safety staff. "There's a strong union presence, and the workers haven't given up their basic OSHA rights to call in an inspector. What has been given up is the general schedule inspection. But if there's a complaint filed, OSHA will still go out."

The Administration, however, hopes to eliminate OSHA's role in such plans. At a meeting of the Advisory Committee on Construction Safety and Health, Auchter spoke at length and in glowing terms about consultation, education and safety committees as elements of labor-management plans. When someone from the labor side asked if he had forgotten to mention enforcement, Auchter said that he expected the other approaches to make enforcement unnecessary. Formal exemption proposals appear to be the next step.

Auchter has also angered labor with his approach to worker safety education. Immediately after his confirmation, he rescinded several OSHA films and pamphlets and cancelled some slide shows. Among the casualties were materials on cotton dust and acrylonitrile, and a history of job safety struggles featuring labor's contributions.

Under Dr. Eula Bingham's stewardship, OSHA had begun to emphasize worker participation in improving health and safety. Attractive, illustrated publications replaced those dry, off-putting pamphlets issued by most Federal agencies, and academic approaches to training gave way to more activist ones. Such approaches have not proved appealing, however, to the Reagan Administration. When Auchter noticed that a recent booklet on cotton dust, for example, had on its cover a photo of a brown lung victim, he claimed the booklet was "offensive" and "obviously favorable" toward labor and ordered 100,000 copies of it destroyed. In its place a new, sanitized version was issued, with all pictures and workers' statements deleted.

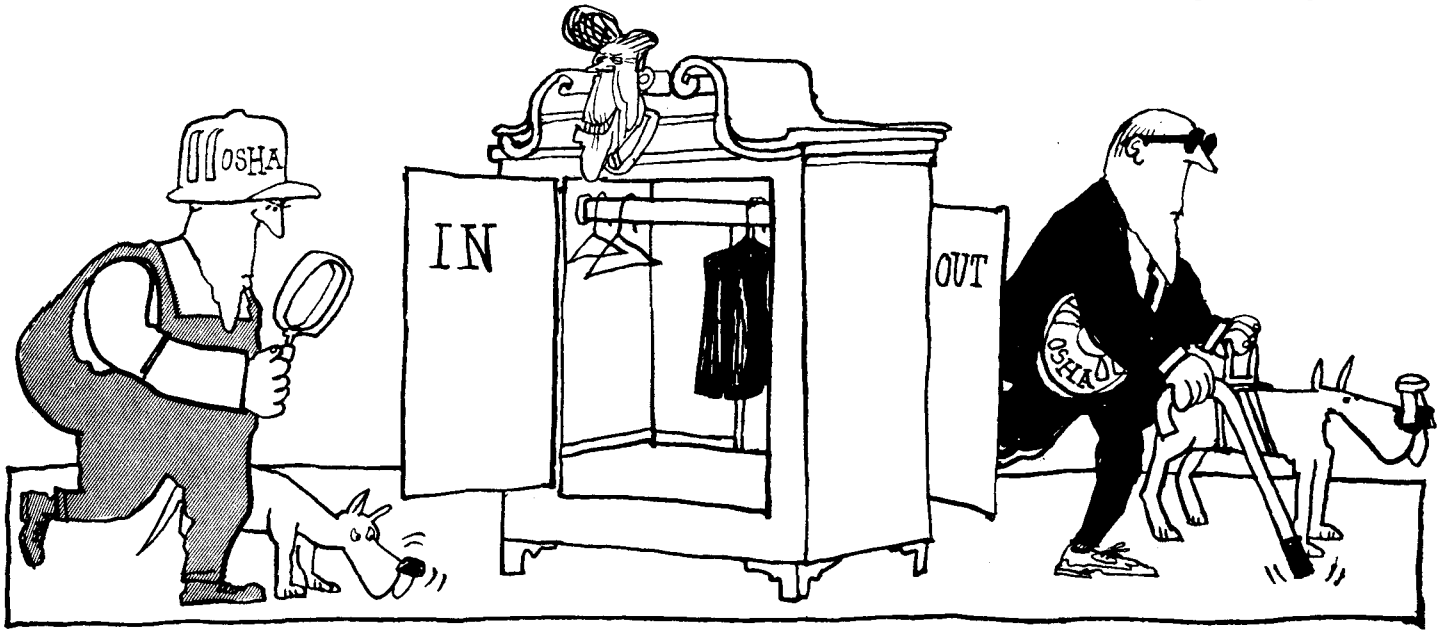
The "neutrality" the Administration advocates will, of course, result in reduced interest in OSHA's educational efforts. That kind of approach "puts the workers to sleep," said Steve Wodka of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers International Union, reacting to the cancellation of a slide show about acrylonitrile. "And that is exactly what industry wants." (Du Pont, which manufactures this known carcinogen, had complained to the Department of Labor that the show was alarmist.)

With eroding Federal guarantees, job safety and health rights will depend more heavily on union activism. But how prepared are the unions? Only in the past three years have more than token educational efforts been launched, most of them supported by funds from OSHA.

Labor has been OSHA's staunchest—and sometimes its only—ally. Last year, the A.F.L.-C.I.O. actually printed bumper stickers that read "OSHA Saves Lives." But the Department of Labor's about-face on the agency is proving confusing to union members. The Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union, for example, recently sponsored rallies in thirty-six cities to defend the cotton-dust standard. During the rallies, many workers asked: "Are we for OSHA or against it?"

Organized labor has also begun to respond to the Reagan cutbacks, particularly those in social programs. The A.F.L.-C.I.O. is planning a national day of protest for September 19, which will target health and safety, among other issues. The effectiveness of such efforts, however, remains uncertain. Like many on the liberal side, labor is still trying to get its bearings in the new Washington. No longer can it automatically lobby the Democratic majority. Especially on regulatory matters, the 97th Congress is virtually unlobbyable.

The enforcement vacuum created by the revamped OSHA could well produce more local initiatives, especially at the plant level. Though standards can be rolled back, workers' consciousness of health and safety issues cannot. Improved contract language, union committees to keep an eye on hazards, more sophisticated use of the grievance procedure



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—such tactics offer promise, at least for organized workers. Without them, OSHA will take its place alongside the company nurse and the foreman's safety lecture as a tool of management for avoiding its responsibilities. □

Technocrats

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

mineral resources predominantly from developing countries during the period was a trade acting in favor of the United States, with a surplus that grew from $3.7 billion to $16 billion. By contrast, the American trade deficit with Japan deepened from $115 million to $3.5 billion.

The Reagan team's response to these problems marks a fundamental shift from the kind of science and technology policy pursued during the Carter years. This shift has implications extending well beyond such conventional issues as government selection of research topics and levels of budgetary support. Put briefly, the dominant themes of science and technology policy were previously those which focused on the allocation of resources to meet national needs. Now dominant is a desire to reshape the political and administrative apparatus of the state in the interests of private corporations. Such a goal is not new to American politics. What is new is the way it is now pursued and justified through science and technology policy.

From its inception, the social legislation of the 1960s and early 1970s and the popular challenge to corporate domination of the political system which it reflected produced broad resistance in the American business community. In retrospect, the actual strength of the popular challenge during the period is less important than the decisiveness and scope of the response it triggered. By the late 1970s, working through a variety of trade associations, domestic and international think tanks, universities, policy institutes, planning agencies, foundations and select offices within the executive branch,* highly mobilized business elites had forged a counterattack. This counterattack disparaged what was called the "antiscience" movement and proclaimed a new age of reason while remystifying reality. It entailed four interrelated campaigns:

(*1*) The rediscovery of the self-regulating market, the wonders of free enterprise and the classical liberal attack on government regulation of the economy, all in the name of liberty.

(*2*) The reinvention of the idea of progress, now cast in terms of "innovation" and "reindustrialization," and the limitation of expectations and social welfare in the quest for productivity.

(*3*) The attack on democracy, in the name of "efficiency," "manageability," "governability," "rationality" and "competence."

(*4*) The remystification of science through the promotion of formalized decision methodologies, the restoration of the authority of expertise and the renewed use of science as legitimation for social policy through deepening industry ties to universities and other "free" institutions of policy analysis and recommendation.

That science and technology policy should be an arena for such massive elite mobilization again underscores both the critical economic roles of science and technology and their current political function. On one hand, science-based high-technology industries are now the most competitive sectors of the economy. In a time of accelerated global economic integration and domestic stagflation, they carry the greatest hopes for domestic revival and continued American international economic dominance. On the other hand, the Enlightenment ideals of applied reason and shared inquiry such industries claim to embody provide needed legitimation for the modern, executive-centered, interventionist state. Not accountable to democratic or juridical norms, state action, when cloaked in the mantle of science, may still be justified as "rational," while consensus on the value-neutral character of scientific enterprise effectively sanitizes the policy formation process, justifying its removal from the control of mass democratic institutions. What is at stake in the current struggle over science and technology policy is not merely the technocratic redefinition of reason but the redefinition of democracy itself. What has been altered by elite counterattack is not merely the pattern of choice within a limited area of government policy but the entire shape of American politics.

Bearers of Enlightenment

If nothing else, the burgeoning regulation of the 1960s and early 1970s challenged once-dominant conceptions of the market as the socially optimal allocator of goods and values. Not surprisingly, the first and most visible part of the business counterattack was a rediscovery of the virtues of the self-regulating market. A broad-based attack on government regulation began to take shape along several

*The number and variety of these institutions precludes their full discussion here, but we note the following important ones: the Trilateral Commission, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the German Marshall Fund, the Committee for Economic Development, the Conference Board, the Business Roundtable, the Industrial Research Institute, the Chemical Manufacturers Association and the American Petroleum Institute. The critical White House offices include the Council on Wage and Price Stability, the Council of Economic Advisers, the Regulatory Analysis and Review Group, the Office of Management and Budget and the Office of Science and Technology Policy. In the "tertiary" sector are the National Academy of Sciences, the Council on Foreign Relations, major foundations (Ford, Rockefeller, Mellon and Sloan), ad hoc commissions established to legitimate specific policy directives and, of course, the universities.

David Dickson is the Washington news editor for the British weekly science journal Nature *and author of* The Politics of Alternative Technology *(Universe). David Noble is an assistant professor in the science, technology and society program at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the author of* America by Design: Science, Technology and the Rise of Corporate Capitalism *and the forthcoming* Forces of Production *(both Knopf).* *This article was adapted from* The Hidden Election: Politics and Economics in the 1980 Presidential Campaign, *edited by Thomas Ferguson and Joel Rogers, which will be published next month by Pantheon Books in association with* The Nation.

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fronts—in the mass media, in Washington and in the courts—proclaiming the virtues of the market and the tyranny of big government.

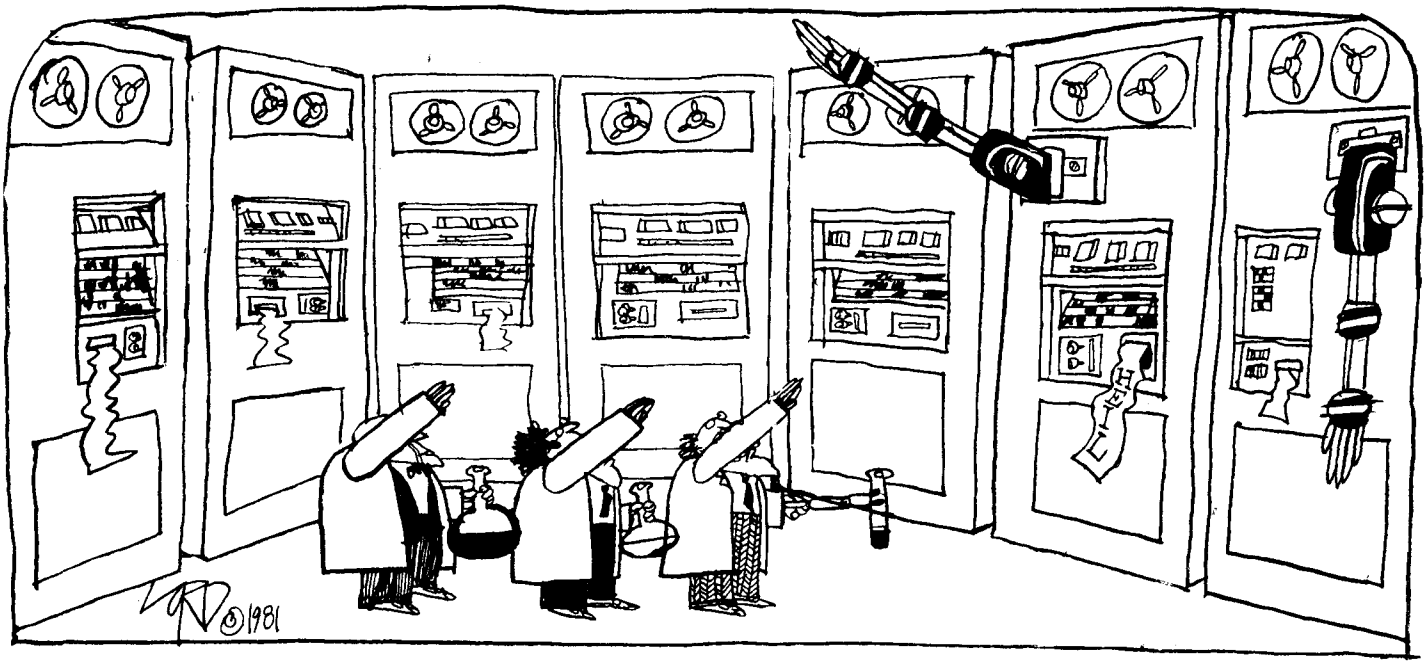
In the forefront of the media campaign were the petrochemical firms, the focus of much regulatory legislation and, in the public eye, the primary perpetrators of a toxic environment. Mobil spent millions buying a regular—and highly visible—spot in the nation's leading newspapers. Dow Chemical preached "Common sense—uncommon chemistry." Du Pont offered the reassurance: "You and Du Pont—there's a lot of good chemistry between us." Monsanto gave the nation a science lesson: "Without chemicals, life itself would be impossible." Union Carbide reminded an already anxious population that "we don't live in a risk-free world," and organized an "issues management team" to help people put the risks of modern life "in perspective." The Chemical Manufacturers Association hired the J. Walter Thompson advertising agency to put together a $5 million media blitz with the message that risk was part of life itself. The naturalness of chemical pollution was also a major theme at Dow, whose ads included the message that "the chemicals we make are no different from the ones God makes. . . . There is an essential unity between chemicals created by God and chemicals created by humans. . . . Birds, for example, are extraordinarily beautiful products produced by God."

Not long ago America's young science-based corporations shared a vision of a better world. Posing as bearers of enlightenment, they declared that progress was their most important product and promised better living through chemistry. In the mid-1970s, with that vision having darkened, they peddled a more scientifically "neutral" message, calling for a neonaturalistic accommodation to the grim realities of life in industrial society. Science and Nature, once opposed, were joined by corporate capital to discipline a still idealistic humanity.

Elsewhere, the lawyers of monopoly headed for Washington to hold the line for liberty. Here, as in the media, science and nature were coupled for a defense of the rights of science-based industry in an Edenic marketplace. The nineteenth century was revisited and computerized. "Grassroots" lobbyists dispatched by the Business Roundtable, the Business Council and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce railed against government interference in the God-ordained and science-sanctified free enterprise system.

At meetings sponsored by the Conference Board in 1975, business executives declared that "we can no longer muddle through." "We don't have a democratic system designed for coping with the modern world." The American system was decried as "inefficient and unpredictable." "Our government is simply not organized to make cost-benefit analysis." Fletcher Byrom, chairman of the Koppers Company and vice chairman of the Committee for Economic Development (C.E.D.), declared that "under conditions of today's technology," democracy has become an anachronism. He later called for a constitutional convention to begin restructuring the American political system in the name of modern technology. For the executives present, such a restructuring was both welcome and necessary, and need not even entail the abandonment of democratic forms. Democracy would remain, but drained of political content. As one participant pointed out, "the market is more democratic than the government" anyway, since in the market "every person gets a vote every day."

The industrialists at the Conference Board meetings were not the only business leaders preoccupied with the new problems of democracy. The Trilateral Commission's study *The Crisis of Democracy* was also published in 1975. The authors of the report were authorities on Western Europe, the United States and Japan. They had been commissioned to grapple with the question "Is political democracy, as it exists today, a viable form of government for the industrial countries of Europe, North America and Asia?" Samuel P. Huntington, professor of government at Harvard, under-



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took to answer the question for the United States.

Huntington addressed the issue from the perspective of one who had spent much of his career among the elite circles of government, consulting for the State Department, the Pentagon and the White House. For him, the previous decade had been marked by a "democratic distemper," an "excess of democracy" that posed a serious threat to established government. His description of the 1960s and early 1970s characterized the period as marked by "privatistic youth," "oppositional adversary intellectuals" who had not been sobered by the experience of governing, an iconoclastic liberal media, a "reassertion of Congress" and the related weakening of the institution of the Presidency, an excess of bureaucratic interference in the economy, rising expectations and increasing popular demands on a government whose legitimate authority had been seriously diminished, a decline in the strength of the traditional political parties, the related inclusion of heretofore "marginal groups" in the political process and a general instability and "overloading" of the institutions of government. In short, Huntington concluded, there had been a dangerous "democratic surge" during the previous decade, and a barely tolerable widespread "democratic challenge to authority."

"Truman had been able to govern the country with the cooperation of a relatively small number of Wall Street lawyers and bankers," Huntington observed, but by the mid-1960s, "the course of power in society had diversified tremendously and this was no longer possible." The result had been a "decline in the governability of democracy at home," and an ensuing "decline in the influence of democracy abroad." To restore order, he recommended "a greater degree of moderation in democracy"—that is, less democracy. In particular, he called for the strengthening of the Presidency, the restoration of confidence in the political process coupled with the exercise of tighter party discipline over that process and a restriction of democratic claims in the name of rationality, efficiency and competence. Again, the attack on democratic forms and processes is promoted in the name of science and expertise: "The arenas where democratic procedures are appropriate are, in short, limited. . . . In many situations, the claims of expertise, seniority, experience and special talents may override the claim of democracy as a way of constituting authority."

For business leaders, the restoration of public confidence in government and in the virtues of working within the system that Huntington called for had to go hand in hand with a restoration of corporate control over the political system. Otherwise the "crisis of democracy" would only worsen. This was the theme of a 1976 C.E.D. conference on major challenges likely to face our economy in the future. The session was chaired by Massachusetts Institute of Technology faculty member Carl Kaysen, who also serves as a German Marshall Fund trustee and member of the C.E.D. advisory board.

Like his counterparts at the Conference Board and the Trilateral Commission, Kaysen described what he called the "increasing and accelerating democratization of the polity," a process characterized by the decline of political parties and the rise of "issue group" politics at the expense of "interest group" politics. "The biggest change is that the equity issues have come increasingly to the fore," together with an "adversary stance . . . enhanced by recent changes in the political process, by the emphasis on wide public participation, on openness, on the avoidance of or control over conflicts of interest." Kaysen noted that the educational level of the population was on the rise and reminded the audience that "it is known that political activism rises with the level of education. Thus the nation is producing a population that will be more interested in political activity, more ready to listen to the kinds of political entrepreneurs who create issue politics, whether they are called the Friends of the Earth or the Defenders of the Consumer or the Preachers of Energy Doom or the Savers of the Rare Species. . . . In some respects," he continued, "this change is a good thing. If we Americans believe our own professions of the democratic faith, we can only welcome a process that brings a larger share of the population into active political life and engagement in the political process. On the other hand . . . it must be recognized that interest groups (e.g., corporate interest groups) tend to have a long political life and a high degree of persistence, while issue groups tend to be more volatile." In order to foster stability within the system, Kaysen recommended the restrengthening of interest groups and a reassertion of their control over the political system. He argued finally that "realistic solutions to the problems . . . may increasingly require a negotiating process of accommodation in detail, a tolerance of asymmetry and discrimination and differentiation impossible to achieve in a legalistic, public, adversary process." In plain English, a more controlled political process with state-sanctioned power hierarchies and the erosion of democratic and juridical norms.

A final example of the new business consensus on democracy is offered by the November 1980 issue of Du Pont's house magazine, *Context*. There, in an article titled "Five Directions for Government Reform," Brookings Institution scholar James Sundquist both crystallizes corporate thinking on democracy over the past five years and reflects renewed industrial confidence in treating the disease. Echoing the sentiments of business leaders, Huntington's Trilateral report, Kaysen and others, Sundquist calls for a strengthening of traditional political parties, a restoration of Presidential leadership to correct the "Congressional excesses of the last decade," a rationalization of the process of selecting presidents (to overcome the "extreme hazard that can lie in leaving the nominating process almost wholly to millions of rank and file voters," a situation resulting from the shift to direct primaries in both parties after 1968) and the creation of a "corps of professional government managers" grounded in scientific management techniques and evaluated by merit rather than political affiliation. "To move in these directions will not be easy," Sundquist acknowledges. "Many of the necessary changes go against the trends of many decades, against settled pat-

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terns of political behavior, against popular attitudes and conceptions." Yet he confidently predicts that "we can begin to make progress in improving the competence of government only when we recognize that our problems are not in our leaders . . . but in the *system* that produces the leaders and which, after their election, obstructs and hampers them." Democracy, in short, must give way to managerial competence.

Antidemocratic Sentiments

From this survey of science and technology policy, several conclusions emerge. First, science and technology have assumed a new centrality in the modern political economy. The economic dimension is demonstrated by the growing dominance of science-based industries. The political dimension appears in the growing technological component of traditional social policy. Second, and precisely because of this centrality, science and technology policy formation enjoys considerable insulation from the institutions of popular democracy and electoral politics, exhibiting a continuity that has withstood changes in political administration from Republican to Democrat and back to Republican again. Third, the content of science and technology policy has shifted in the past several years from the structuring of scientific resource delivery to national problem areas to the encouragement of the decision procedures and allocative mechanisms of private enterprise and the market. Fourth, this shift in content is traceable to elite mobilization against the popular demands for participation and equity characteristic of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Fifth, in the process of this elite mobilization and the transformation in government structures it entailed, science and technology have played an increasingly important role in legitimizing executive-centered state power and corporate domination of the political system.

Linking all these observations on science and technology policy is a consideration of the forms of governance appropriate to an industrially advanced, technologically based society. This most basic of concerns was raised recently by Dr. John Kemeny, chairman of the Presidential commission established to investigate the 1979 accident at the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant, when he described to an audience at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology what he saw as a growing tension between Jeffersonian democracy and the demands placed on political institutions by advanced technology. Referring in particular to the tangle of misjudgments that had led to the T.M.I. accident, Kemeny commented: "I've heard many times that although democracy is an imperfect system, we somehow always muddle through. The message I want to give you, after long and hard reflection, is that I'm very much afraid it is no longer possible to muddle through. The issues we deal with do not lend themselves to that kind of treatment." Speaking in a broader context, Dr. Lewis Branscomb, chief scientist at I.B.M. and chairman of the National Science Board, also noted the tensions between democracy and technology. "Each time the Congress and the executive are unable to achieve a public consensus on a technologically complex issue," said Branscomb, "we witness another failure in the consensus process of our democracy. If this continues to happen with increasing frequency, the pressures to alter the political foundation of our society inevitably grow."

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The dilemma is a real one. If we cannot learn to develop institutions capable of controlling technology in an acceptable and desirable way, then its undesirable consequences will be experienced by default. Yet precisely because of the importance of science and technology, efforts to submit them to popular control encounter deep and abiding resistance. In a corporate-dominated political system such as that of the United States, demands that the direction and utilization of science and technology be determined within the institutions of popular democratic politics represent a direct challenge to the power of private corporations. In return, the representatives of corporate power suggest not that the development of technology should be molded to social demands as expressed through these institutions but that the institutions themselves be sacrificed to the "demands" of technological development. Ed David, vice president for research at Exxon, has noted that "the adversary relationship between government and industry in the U.S. . . . has its roots in the populist attitudes that have long pervaded our culture. But this style may have become seriously counterproductive." Fellow Reagan science adviser Simon Ramo of T.R.W. has a similar message: "We see in the United States today a severe mismatch between the high potential of technological advance and the low potential of the country's social-political progress. The problem is not technology per se. We are simply not organized to use science and technology to the fullest."

For corporate leaders, the full utilization of scientific and technological knowledge therefore requires the retreat from democratic norms and procedures in the interest of "rationality" and science. Thus William O. Baker, president of Bell Laboratories and a past member of the President's Science Advisory Committee, speaks of the "bizarre conflicts between the presumptive laws and regulations of pervasive government in a low risk, welfare society, and the present realities of technical and scientific advance, which, more than ever, demand the freedom to experiment and innovate boldly."

Former M.I.T. president and presidential science adviser Jerome Wiesner makes the political significance of this push for rationality explicit in a recent interview with *U.S. News and World Report* titled "After Affluence, Americans Are Not Prepared to Go Back." There Wiesner echoes and seconds the antidemocratic sentiments of corporate executives. "In the past two decades," he comments,

> the U.S. has moved a long distance in the direction of becoming a more open and democratic society, and we are still trying. While this is an admirable goal, in the process of trying to do this we have created a society that is unmanageable because we no longer have established ground-rules for decision-making, to say nothing about significant knowledge or material goods. Our problem at the present time is not that the world has become much more complex but that we have become a society in which we have let a lot more people have a voice without at the same time figuring out a way to keep the system operating. A multitude of people are now able to participate in the decision-making process—without adequate knowledge—and all have either something to gain or something to lose. This leads to a paralysis of decision making.

What is needed, Wiesner concludes, "is the re-establishment of a governmental mechanism to end the paralysis." In short, what is needed is government by the experts, a stronger, more technocratic executive and perhaps a new American Constitution.

Thus for the representatives of corporate interest, the conflict between science-technology-"rationality" and democracy is easily resolved. Democracy must be abandoned in the name of a cynical notion of "progress," where progress refers to the continued development of science and technology within a structure of private direction and gain. Such a sacrifice of democracy is "easy" for those who already command vast private resources of money and power, because their interests do not rely on democratic norms and procedures for their expression.

But for the rest of the population, the abandonment of democracy is neither easy nor affordable. For them, democracy is not the anomalous luxury of a previous age but the only possible present guarantee of political power in a system that otherwise rigorously reinforces harsh inequalities in the distribution of income, wealth and political clout. It is not something that can be sacrificed in the name of corporate progress but the only means of achieving social welfare and equality, health and environmental integrity. For the working population, abandoning democracy is not an option, and the easy corporate solution to the problems of democracy and technology is therefore no solution at all.

But the corporate conclusion is not the only one. Implicit in all of the foregoing analysis is an alternative view of the problems of democracy and technology that sees those problems as rooted in a lack of democracy rather than in an excess of it. Under this alternative view, what is currently needed in American politics is not the closure of democratic institutions but their revival and extension, which implies as well a need for continued social regulation of private enterprise, and the subordination of science and technology to democratic choice, socially determined need and human and ecological survival. In sum, what is needed is the articulation of a more hopeful notion of progress and the future development of American political institutions in which the apparent contradiction between the principle of democracy and the possibilities of science and technology can be reconciled or resolved in the interests of humanity instead of in the interests of power and profit. Such an alternative view can only be suggested here. Its full exploration awaits resumption of those popular deliberations on equity and participation begun in the 1960s and early 1970s, whose achievements are now being erased. The political struggles of that period were prematurely closed. But the questions they raised about the future direction of American politics remain unanswered, and are now more urgent than ever. Thomas Jefferson once wrote that "whenever the people are well informed, they can be trusted with their own government." At present, the people are neither well informed nor in control. □

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

A Circle of Pitchforks

A poem about the farmers' protest against a power line through Pope County, Minnesota.

I

They used to call it a sheriff's sale.
Had one over by Scandia in the middle of the '30s.
My dad told me how
the sheriff would ride out to the farm
to auction off the farmer's goods for the bank.
All the neighbors would come with pitchforks
and gather in the yard—
"What am I bid for this cow?"
3¢. 4¢. No more bids.
If a stranger came in and bid a nickel
a circle of pitchforks gathered around him
and the bidding stopped.
Even in the grey light of memory
the windmill goes around uneasily.
The farmer's overalls
blow into the fork tines—
the striped overalls look like convict suits.
A smell of cowshit and wet hay seeps into everything.
The stranger wears tweed clothes
and a watch chain.
The sheriff's voice weakens
as he moves from hayrack to hayrack
holding up tools,
describing cattle and pigs
one at a time.

The space between those fork tines
is the air we all breathe.

II

"Resist much, obey little."
Walt Whitman told us.
To bring light!
That's the thing!
Somewhere in North Dakota
lignite gouged out of the prairies
is transformed into light.
But you are not in darkness, brothers,
for day to surprise you like a thief.
We are all sons of light,
sons of the day;
we are not of the night,
or of darkness.
Let us not sleep, as others do
but keep awake and be sober.
Those who sleep,
sleep at night,
and those who get drunk,
are drunk at night.

III

There is so much light in Minnesota.
The white faces brought here from Arctic Europe,
the lines of white birch in the white snow,
white ice like a skin over the water,
even the pale sun seen through snow fog.
White churches, white steeples, white gravestones.

Come into an old cafe
in Ghent, or Fertile, or Holloway.
The air is steamy with cigarette smoke and frozen breath.
Collars up under a sea of hats pulled down,
you can hardly see the mouths moving under them.
The talk is low, not much laughing.
Eat some hot dish, some jello,
and have a little coffee and pie.
These are the men wrecking the ship of state—
The carriers of darkness.

Up in the cities
the freeway lights burn all night.

IV

My grandfather came out of Iceland
Where he took orders from the Danes and starved.
After he died, I found his homestead paper
signed by Teddy Roosevelt,
the red wax still clear and bright.
In the corner, a little drawing of a rising sun
and a farmer plowing his way toward it.
A quarter section, free and clear.
On his farm he found arrowheads
every time he turned the soil.
Free and clear. Out of Iceland.
In the thirties, the farm was eaten by a bank;
thrown back up when Olson
disobeyed the law that let them gorge.
In high school they teach
that Hubert Humphrey was a liberal
and Floyd Olson was a highway.

V

Out on the power line barricades
the old farmers are afraid their cow's
teats will dry up after giving strange milk,
and their corn will hum in the granary all night.

They have no science, no words, no law,
no eminent domain
over this prairie full of arrowheads and flowers,
only they know it
and the state does not.

We homestead in our bodies too,
a few years, and then go back
in a circle
faster than the speed of light.

Bill Holm

Bill Holm, an English teacher and ragtime pianist, lives in Minneota, Minnesota.

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Mystifications of the Couch

JOEL KOVEL

PSYCHOANALYSIS: The Impossible Profession. *By Janet Malcolm. Alfred A. Knopf. 168 pp. $9.95.*

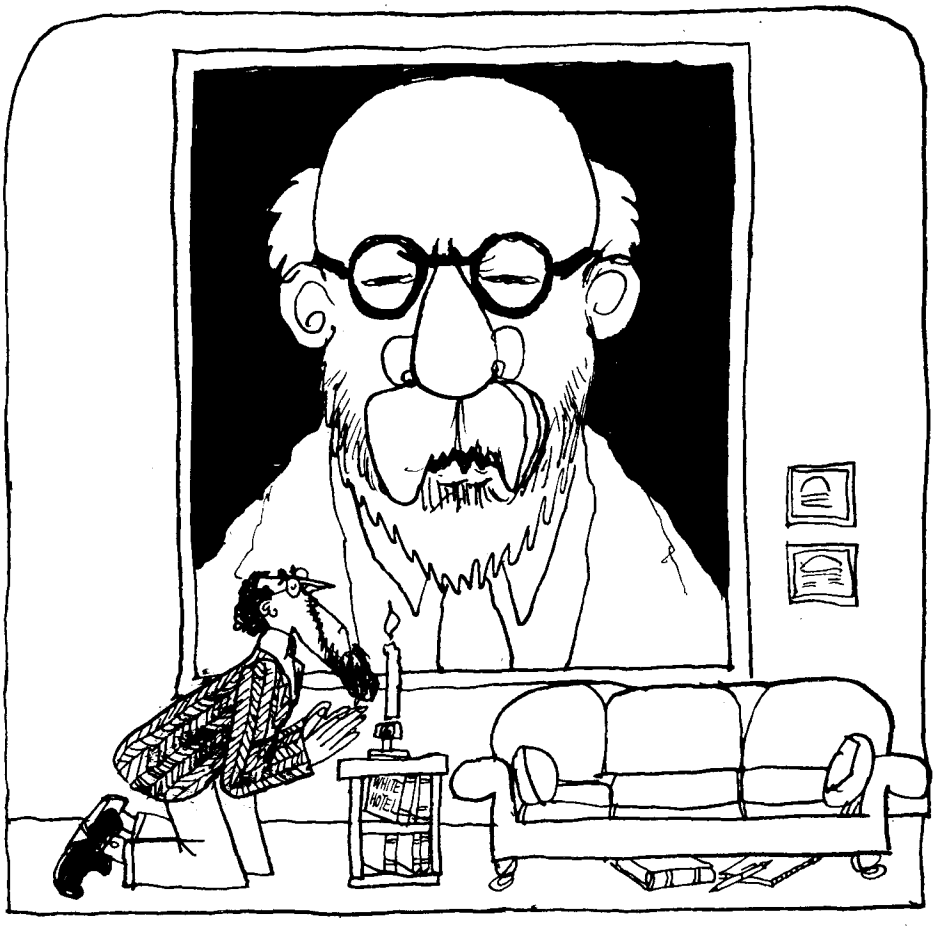
When the articles by Janet Malcolm that constitute the body of this book appeared last year in *The New Yorker*, a current of gossip flowed up Park Avenue and across 96th Street to the West Side. "Who is Aaron Green?" asked the curious horde, as they struggled in vain to discover the identity of the pseudonymous psychoanalyst whose extraordinarily candid reflections on his "impossible profession" had been the substance of Malcolm's work. As far as I know, the secret remains locked in the artful text, and it is just as well. For Aaron Green is EveryAnalyst, the archetypal, unreconstructed, orthodox Freudian. He is the Unknown Soldier of his profession, a guardian of the flame which has been kept lit for three quarters of a century despite periodic waves of infidels. At one point in his ruminations, Green tells Malcolm (he is rebutting those who think analysis changes with the times) that his first patient "was a classic hysteric. . . . The case could have been done in 1900. Or 1100." He might have added that in 1100 there would have been nobody to analyze her. The crusaders of that era were after Saracens, not Kleinians, and when they went to Jerusalem the professional costs were not tax-deductible.

There is something undeniably appealing about Green's faith, particularly in a cynical and jaded age. But there is something pathetic and ironic about it too. How could Sigmund Freud, that consummate skeptic and demystifier, have led to this? Could Freud's intransigence in the face of seductive illusions have inspired the wish to believe in him as a hero? Perhaps. But Freud was an exceedingly curious person. There is no telling how much he exploited his qualities as a demystifier in order to build up a mystique. Whatever else the great "master of suspicion" (in Paul Ricoeur's words) may have been, he was also a jealous patriarch morbidly concerned with building a movement. He got his wish, and then some. A visit to the New York Psychoanalytic Institute—the original Freudian training center in the United States, and the institutional focus of this book—will reveal such a reliquary devoted to the Master as would make the Vatican sit up and take notice. Truly the place is more a shrine than an academy, and bears little resemblance to a scientific establishment.

Yet acolytes such as Green are invariably sophisticated and worldly medical professionals who tirelessly invoke the trappings of science in their never-ending sectarianism. Freud's spirit of inquiry has dissolved into scholasticism and squabbling, and as Malcolm elegantly reveals, the average psychoanalytic apparatchik may well be worse off with respect to the social diseases of petty jealousy, backbiting and vanity than the unenlightened masses who have been denied the benefits of psychoanalysis.

A typical sectarian, Green is as bitter toward his colleagues as he is zealous in defense of their common creed. Yet this stunted individual carries with him one of the most powerful insights of the twentieth century. Recognizing that he may be bent under its weight, Malcolm refrains from engaging in exposé. Instead, she uses her dialogue with Green as an occasion to search for a complex truth in the midst of cant. Thus *Psychoanalysis: The Impossible Profession* becomes almost like an analysis itself, a subtle and inconclusive drama. We see Green, full of *ressentiment* and integrity, become surprisingly eager to descend from the role of expositor to that of patient. Meanwhile Malcolm's role becomes doubly ambiguous: first, by her playing analyst to Green, and second, by her barely acknowledged yet unmistakable desire to find for herself something of substance in Freudianism. That the outcome of such a quest can be no more than an inconclusive *credo quia absurdum* is an untidy resolution, perhaps, but one not uncharacteristic of the real world.

What are the underlying issues here? The strict Freudian holds that the good



Joel Kovel is a psychoanalyst, professor of psychiatry at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine and author of the forthcoming The Age of Desire *(Pantheon).*

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is enemy of the best, in other words, that it is all too easy to produce a superficial cure (called derisively "therapy" or "support," as opposed to analysis) by being "merely helpful" to the analysand. Beneath this technical point is a profound assumption about our nature: According to Freudian orthodoxy, *a*) infantile desire carries more weight in our motivation than the conscious adult ego, and *b*) we have a radical need to repress this truth, a need no amount of cultural sophistication can abolish. The only means by which our infantile desires can be uncovered is through the so-called transference in analysis, i.e., the patient's unconscious re-enactment of infantile patterns toward the analyst. And only through transference can the individual begin to renounce whatever is destructive in his or her infantilism. Being "helpful" by explaining too much, or by giving advice, or even by being too warm, is therefore repressive. Short-circuiting the painstaking and painful buildup of tension necessary for transference deprives the individual of access to the unconscious. Ergo, the imperative for emotional asceticism in the orthodox practice of analysis—and the credo of an Aaron Green.

Unfortunately this worthy principle suffers from being objectively undemonstrable. As a result, it has to be taken on faith, which compromises the enlightening impulse inherent in the principle itself. Ultimately, therapeutic propositions of this kind rest on the authority of the person who delivers them. More to the point is yet another layer of irony inherent in Freudian practice. The austerity of the analytic ideal can only be redeemed through the wisdom and humanity of the person who applies it. Since these are ineffable qualities, there is no such thing, really, as analytic "technique": Analysis is only as good as the person who practices it. To forget this makes the analyst's "neutrality" into callousness.

Unhappily, psychoanalytic institutions are not structured to foster the virtue of their trainees. The austerity required of the practice encourages the development of a pinched attitude toward life, while the ordeal of training tends to crush whatever spontaneity may be left. These are only tendencies, however. What freezes them into a dismal actuality is, ironically again, the very ethos of the therapy, which is a gross mystification transmitted through the training analysis. A curse of subjectivism hangs over psychoanalysis: The repressed is the only thing that *really* counts. This is at best arguable as a principle of therapy, but it is inexcusable when generalized to govern the conduct of a group of worldly professionals. Consider this revealing incident, reported by Green, of how an attempt on the part of the analytic candidates to organize themselves was instantly thwarted by the casual remark of a senior analyst: "Why an organization? The important thing is to say whatever comes to mind" (this being the so-called basic rule of analytic practice). Green goes on: "I thought, Son of a bitch! *But. But.* He was right. The motives of student organizations are nothing if not transferential." A great deal of despair and servility has been condensed into this remark—but also, lest we feel sorry for Green, so has a

"Every friend of freedom ought to lay to heart what he has to say." —Bertrand Russell

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pact with the Father that pledges to perpetuate the social order by restoring its upper classes to normalcy. (Green seems genuinely pleased that his first patient married a dentist. In fact, that is all we are told of her life after the analysis.)

The "ego" that orthodox psychoanalysis would protect from desire turns out in practice to be modeled after the perfect bourgeois. By reducing our nature and history alike to a doomed struggle against parents, psychoanalysis has consigned itself to social backwardness and intellectual sterility; it has become the bureaucracy of subjectivity. You could switch the contents of current meetings of the psychoanalytic society with those of ten years ago and no one would know the difference. What a fall from the brilliant early years of the project! But one inevitable, perhaps, when a discourse whose power lies in the decoding of repressions engages in a repression of its own, namely, the implicit denial that consciousness is also determined, as Marx put it, by "social being." Thus it is not insight into the unconscious that has stunted psychoanalysis but fidelity to the established order.

Well done, psychoanalysis remains a thing of beauty and value, for it cherishes the individual in an age that would obliterate individuality. The institutionalization of analysis, on the other hand, has been a disaster. The final irony is that Freud would very likely be rejected if he offered his candidacy to the very progeny who revere his memory. □

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Unfashionable Decadence

ALICE K. TURNER

SAKI: A Life of Hector Hugh Munro. *By A. J. Langguth. Simon and Schuster. 366 pp. $14.95.*

Every short-story collection worth its copyright permissions includes at least one of Saki's little gems. I've run across "The Open Window" half a dozen times, and "Sredni Vashtar" nearly as often, most recently in V.S. Pritchett's Oxford collection. If these two weren't available, the happy anthologist could more than make do with "Tobermory," "The Lumber-Room," "Filboid Studge" and at least a dozen others. Few writers have produced so many superior short stories.

But about Saki himself we know very little. We know that he was born Hector Hugh Munro in 1870, in Burma, and brought up in Devonshire by two frightful aunts (who turn up time and again, in various disguises, in his stories), that he took his pen name from *The Rubaiyat* of Omar Khayyam (wildly popular at the time), that he spent much of his adult life abroad, mostly as a newspaper correspondent, and that he died in the trenches in France in 1916. His last words were, "Put that bloody cigarette out."

A. J. Langguth has attempted to redress what seems to be the neglect of an accomplished writer, but he hasn't been able to come up with much more biographical data than would fit into a preface. Facing this dearth of information, he has asked *why*, in an era that has been examined so thoroughly and so often, Munro has remained such a shadowy figure. Langguth's detective work has brought him to a conclusion that seems entirely convincing and that casts yet another ray of light on the age.

The reasons for Munro's relative obscurity seem, at first, mundane enough. He started as a political satirist and continued to write for newspapers rather than for the smart journals that attracted more attention. Although normally gregarious, he was not "social." His stories are often set in country houses and fashionable drawing rooms, but he never really moved in those circles, and Langguth implies that he chose not to. He was abroad a great deal, and though he wrote many letters to his family, his sister, Ethel (who eventually became quite dotty), destroyed most of them. Finally, he never wrote a successful novel, and the teller of short tales, no matter how clever and beautifully crafted they are, often gets short shrift.

Langguth fits the facts of Munro's life together to build a convincing case for a deliberately obscure way of life. He preferred the shadows to the spotlight, contends Langguth, because he was an erotically active and psychologically liberated homosexual at a time when one did not admit to being such.

The sex lives of literary Britons have always been something to marvel at. Quite a few of them pretty nearly excluded sex altogether—Ruskin, Shaw, Edward Lear; and James Barrie and Lewis Carroll in any practical sense. Byron went after anything warm and breathing, and there are those who will claim Shakespeare had similar inclinations. But homosexuality, common, even fashionable, as it may have been among certain groups at certain times, was, during the period that fell between the excesses of the *Yellow Book* crowd and the bizarre convolutions of Bloomsbury, quite literally "a love that dare not speak its name."

Oscar Wilde (who, Langguth reminds us, was bisexual and quite sympathetic to women, which was not the case with Munro) lost his libel action against the Marquess of Queensbury in 1895, when Munro was 25. Wilde had been enormously popular as writers go, and his punishment was a dreadful one. Fashionable decadence became suddenly unfashionable and remained so, uneasily, for some time.

Munro appears to have been unswervingly homosexual, probably from early

Alice K. Turner is fiction editor of Playboy.

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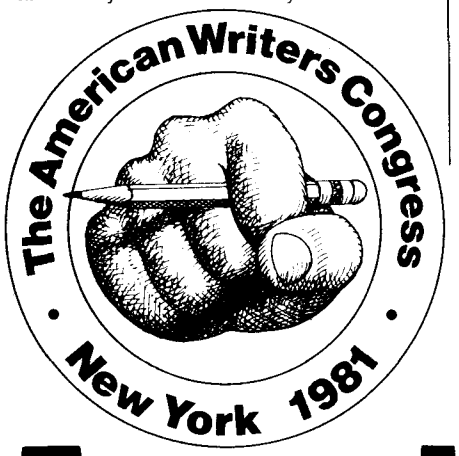

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adolescence. Bertie van Tahn, one of the languidly mischievous young men of Saki's stories, "was so depraved at seventeen that he had long ago given up trying to be any worse," while Reginald, Clovis Sangrail and Comus Bassington all seem to have gained a great deal of worldly wisdom at a tender age. Certainly Saki was obsessed with beautiful youths, a point that Langguth demonstrates fairly memorably in his discussion of a story called "Gabriel-Ernest."

Hence the sojourns in foreign lands, where (as Christopher Isherwood later said) boys were more available and cheaper, and where no one was keeping an eye on him. Hence Ethel's ruthless suppression of his letters—one gathers that he was obliquely frank with her. Hence, too, the low social profile: a man as sexually active as Langguth believes Munro to have been (he bases his conviction on a diary code) would have had little patience with the comical hoops through which Marcel Proust, Munro's contemporary, so realistically puts his gay bachelors-about-town. Hostesses might well have been leery of him too.

Aside from his sexual preferences, Munro was decent, gallant, brave and a superb storyteller. Langguth feels he displays "a special quality of homosexual wit," rueful, intolerant and self-mocking, and perhaps it is that quality which makes Saki's stories seem so modern. Though, even in his own time, he was labeled an "Edwardian," his best stories, which are often those dealing with children, seem timeless, as funny, or as macabre, now as then. For readers who love them, this book will be indispensable simply because it prints six new ones. If none of them are "The Story-Teller" (my own sentimental favorite), then what is? There are those of us for whom the mere information that Clovis Sangrail has teamed up with Vera Dermot (of "The Open Window") "in a commercial venture suited to their peculiar talents" is sufficient. □

One for Our Side

ROBERT LEKACHMAN

THE MONTAUK FAULT. *By Herbert Mitgang. Arbor House. 285 pp. $12.95.*

If you have sickened from too many seasons of Joseph Kraft and James Reston but dread cold-turkey withdrawal from punditry, try supplementing *The Nation* with political thrillers. Hate the Russians? *The Spike* will tell you more than you possibly want to know about the reach of the K.G.B.'s tentacles into the vitals of American journalism and politics. Love Menachem Begin? E. Howard Hunt, the very one, in his latest contribution to pulp fiction, *The Gaza Intercept*, makes it clear that Ha Mossad, Israel's secret service, is an inadequately appreciated bulwark against nuclear terror. Gloomy about our own fair land even after (or because of) watching Ronald Reagan on television? Paul Erdman, in his dreadful new *The Last Days of America*, supplies as the cause of the decline of the American imperium the corruption of American businessmen—a plausible enough hypothesis implausibly handled by a modern master of barbarous language.

I welcome to the company of practitioners of literary intrigue a classy new contender. Herbert Mitgang, a veteran of long service on *The New York Times*, nevertheless writes civilized English, tinged with sophisticated irony. I can't help liking the man even more for his opinions. His hero, an honorable newspaperman, hates the Vietnam War, in which his only son died, distrusts the Pentagon, the Central Intelligence Agency and their political friends, lambastes conglomerates busily engaged in swallowing up decently edited newspapers and periodicals, spares an approving word for this journal and stops just short of trashing the Home, Weekend and Living sections of his own quasi-Felkerized newspaper.

Mitgang sketches with particularly enjoyable malice a certain Jane Twining Delafield, a self-described bottom-line girl, currently engaged in transforming our hero Sam Linkum's newspaper into an echo of *People* magazine. Delafield—whose tripartite name, coincidentally or otherwise, recalls to memory a prominent woman executive who a year or two ago became a casualty of infighting at a very high TV network level—talks this way: "You don't have to shit-kick me. I know you're one of the heavy hitters, journalisticwise," and "Unless you're holding your finger to the wind, you're farting in the breeze," or, just one more, "Our current thinking is that the newspaper branch should have a regular daily section devoted to the main personalities of the moment—not the ding-a-lings but the up-front crowd, the take-charge guys and gals, the Now Generation."

Briefly tempted by the editorship which would mean the higher salary he urgently needs to pay for the care of his permanently institutionalized wife, Sam opts for integrity over cash, as all who knew him expected. His message to his temptress emulates her own linguistic manner: "Go fuck the paper yourself." Aware of his availability, an old buddy and World War II intelligence colleague recruits him for a secret mission of vital import to the future of the human race. Now head of Air Force intelligence, Hap Chorley smokes Cuban cigars, engages in mild lechery, drinks Jack Daniels devoutly and, beneath the surface of all-around slobbishness, conceals an acute mind and a sensitive conscience. He convinces his skeptical friend that he really is a good guy, nearly as appalled as Sam himself at the crazies in the Pentagon and the C.I.A. and their allies in three-piece suits.

The inventive plot revolves around two nasty new weapons. The American breakthrough allows us at will to dry up entire lakes by boiling the water away, incidentally killing fish and other fauna in the vicinity. The matching Russian achievement allows the defenders of their faith to trigger an earthquake where it will do the most to accelerate the march of Socialism. Much as Martin Cruz Smith in *Gorky Park* paired as heroes a Moscow policeman and a New York City cop, Mitgang presents as Chorley's opposite number a Russian intelligence potentate, the formidable General Zaremba, a woman said to be equipped with three testicles. (Mitgang seems to have been encountering gorgons.) No charmer, Zaremba still is on the side of survival. She worries that the maniacs on her side will escalate confrontation with their equally psychotic American counterparts to the point of nuclear war.

Of course I cannot honorably reveal how it all comes out. But if you are reading these comments, it is fair to assume that some days or months yet remain before atheistic Communism and exploitative capitalism mutually ex-

Robert Lekachman is a member of The Nation*'s Editorial Board and author, most recently, of* Capitalism For Beginners *(Pantheon).*

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tinguish themselves and cockroaches inherit the planet.

On the whole that would be a pity, because Sam, in the course of his negotiations, pursues an itinerary that allows him to enjoy masterpieces of Italian art, the sinking stones of Venice, Leningrad's Hermitage museum and various urban milieus. Mitgang, who seems to have been everywhere, writes lovingly of the minor and major delights of cultural achievement. To be fair, we have not examined the case for the cockroaches.

No doubt I have said enough to convey my enjoyment of Mitgang's prose, opinions and attitude toward life and its diversions. His title, I might belatedly explain, refers to the disintegration of the Montauk lighthouse as a small demonstration of Soviet skills in the manipulation of geological faults. I hope that Mitgang will continue to strike blows for sanity in sequels to *The Montauk Fault*. William Buckley keeps his hero Blackford Oakes busy on behalf of the C.I.A. The least Mitgang can do is to keep Sam Linkum occupied on our side. □

FILMS.

ROBERT HATCH

Prince of the City

Thanks largely to the media's preoccupation with their tribulations and their villainies, big-city cops have become the soiled and scary heroes of the public imagination. The attraction of the subject is evident: if you want credit for social responsibility and at the same time earn a gratifying return on your time and talent, there is no better area for investigation than the private world of a metropolitan police force. Thus on the screen, among others, we have been shown *Serpico* and *Fort Apache, the Bronx*, and currently we have Sidney Lumet's *Prince of the City*. The screenplay is by Jay Presson Allen and Lumet, from a book by Robert Daley, and the book was derived from the experiences of Robert Leuci, a former New York City detective. The screen version also reflects Lumet's own brush with informers and investigators [see *The Nation*, April 18] back in the 1950s, when the likes of Harvey Matusow and Victor Riesel were riding high on anti-Red hysteria.

The picture is long, almost three hours, and both densely populated and intricately plotted. I found its thread hard to follow, partly because much of the dialogue is so slurred and colloquial as to be incomprehensible and partly because players keep pouring in to join the action until the field begins to resemble a mob scene. Probably that is how the Leuci affair metastasized, but it does not make a tidy film. On the other hand, the dominant figures are sharply drawn by vivid actors; they are exciting to watch, even when one is not sure where they stand in the proliferating spider web. And the ever deeper enmeshment of the hero is painfully clear.

Daniel Ciello (Treat Williams) is a detective in the narcotics division of the New York City Police Department. He works more or less autonomously with three other officers, and the squad has an enviable record for effectiveness, with no one disposed to look into their methods or ethics. However, an investigation into police corruption opens in the city, and when one of its lawyers calls him in for an interview, Danny's reaction is puzzling. This fellow, Rick Cappalino (Norman Parker), is obviously fishing, and Ciello rails at him for his arrogant ignorance of how police survive in the inner city. But he keeps going back, voluntarily, to see the man, each meeting ending in further vituperation. And Cappalino, patient and plausible, keeps dropping his lure into the pool of Ciello's uneasiness, until suddenly the detective agrees to commit the unpardonable sin of his tribe: he will wear a recorder and solicit evidence from the cops and the Italian community. He stipulates, almost too passionately, that he will never spy on his own teammates. But, in fact, he does; it turns out that many of the crooks and clubhouse leaders whose unguarded words he tapes are relatives or blood brothers, and it turns out that Ciello and his star team have committed crimes as consistently as they have collared criminals.

Why, then, does he volunteer to cooperate? It is never clear, but an explanation of sorts is that he feels guilty, that he wants to wipe a very long slate clean with one daring gesture. Somewhere in the film it is said that cops are easy to "turn" because they are all beset by an urge to confess. It sounds a little too pat, but perhaps it is so. A deeper problem with *Prince of the City* is its inability to cope with the moral conflict at the heart of its story.

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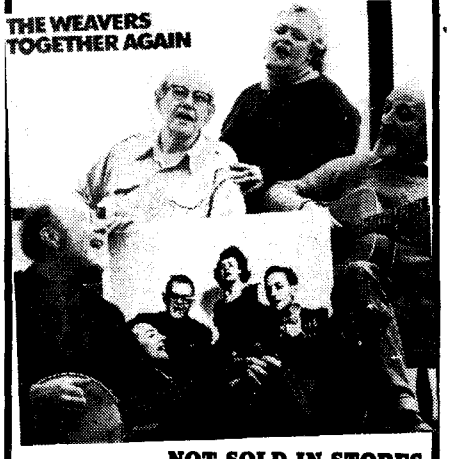

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Reason is on the side of the crime committee and its superiors in Washington, but showmanship is on the side of the cops. So to a man the former are seen as personally ambitious or inhumanly self-righteous. They are much cannier than Ciello; they lure him into their clutches and give him the rope to hang himself. By contrast, the cops are warm-hearted men who work dangerously and play boisterously. To get the job done, they live symbiotically with criminals and they treat their victims with compassion. Their affections are strong, particularly for one another, and they observe a code of absolute mutual trust. When Ciello is cornered into breaking that code, his comrades are undone. It happens that they are all crooks. They steal, they take bribes, they perjure themselves. But excuses are made—policemen become dishonest by small, almost imperceptible steps, and the necessities of their work lead them into crime. They are in a position to know that defense lawyers, district attorneys and judges are trifling with the law, and they resent the assumption that only the police, who occupy the most exposed positions, must traffic with corruption and keep their hands clean.

So you end up rooting for these attractive, vulnerable men. You grieve for the one who puts a pistol into his mouth and cheer the one (played with marvelous brio by Jerry Orbach) who defies the reformers. I kept hoping to the end that Danny Ciello would somehow be vindicated. But how could he be? He was a crooked cop who yearned for absolution and was pushed to betray his friends in a play for it. *Prince of the City* dabbles in deep waters. It treats with great affection the actions and impulses of some attractive, headstrong and bold men, but it never faces the implications of what they do. As the picture tells it, police corruption is inevitable, perhaps even necessary. If that is so, it is not sufficient to end the film with a close-up of Danny smiling in helpless submission as a cop he has never seen before lashes into him with contempt. That is a tearful evasion of a profound social malady. *Prince of the City* is an entertainment, an expert one, about good guys and bad, but its mass-audience ambitions induce it to present real events as melodrama, and it ends up not knowing which of the guys are good, which bad. Presumably it depends on your point of view, but that is what the movie conspicuously lacks. □

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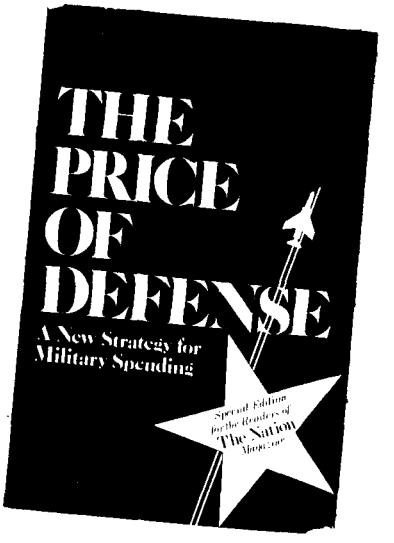

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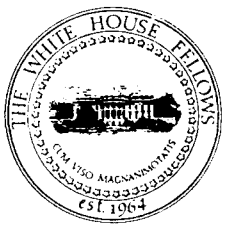

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Crossword Puzzle No. 1881

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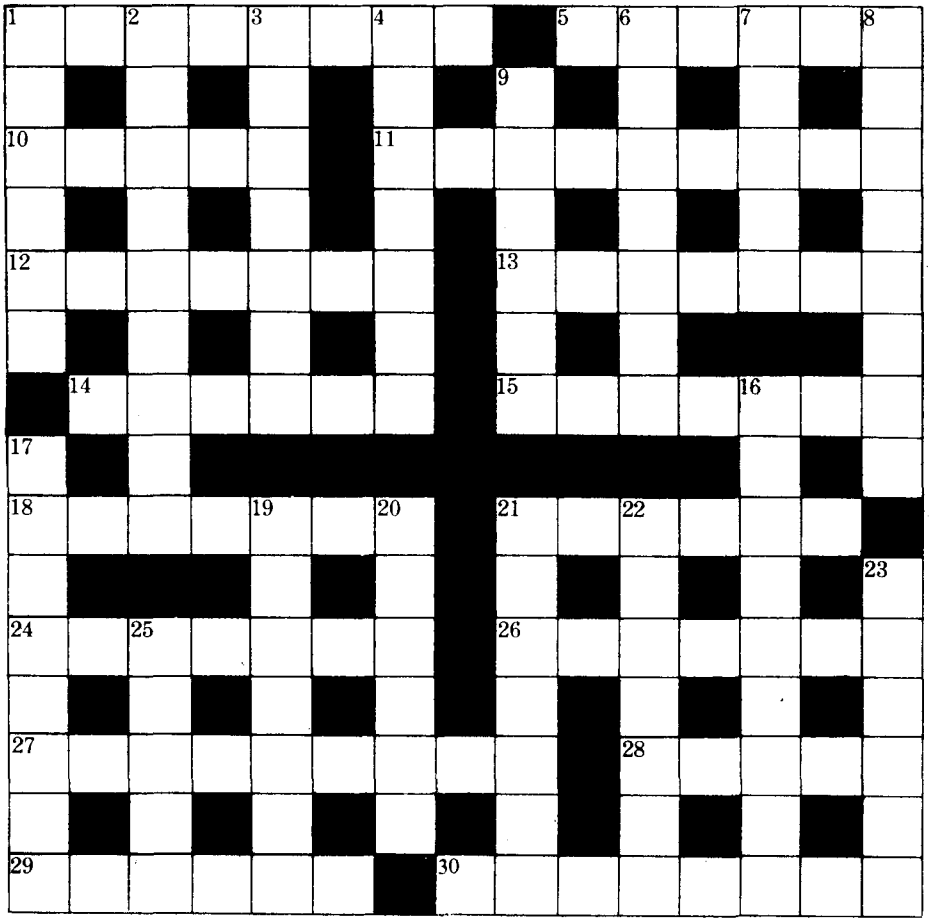

ACROSS

1 See 7 down
5 Chargers might be periodically, as most birds are—sick in bed! (6)
10 and 17 down Akin to what happens in the domino theory, one might handcuff ultra-conservatism this way. (5,8)
11 There was a war-time stipulation concerning seating arrangement under it. (5,4)
12 Guards for 20, possibly. (7)
13 What was bad for Buck is filled with awe—in the main, it floats. (7)
14 Certain foreign food, my lad, is very bad for you! (6)
15 She's in heat? Quite the other way around, perhaps because of the old dress type. (7)
18 Split-shingle, with a twist, as some say. (7)
21 A kind of gull, fish or candy. (6)
24 What a vine may be—or whatever grabs you! (7)
26 Does such a room have to be as high as it is long and wide? (7)
27 Does it disprove Donne's statement? (4,2,3)
28 A wager in like circumstances helps, in a way. (5)
29 Attaching a handle to something? (6)
30 Runs down something of itself, in the character of Bottom. (8)

DOWN

1 Old guns and hats often had to be so. (6)
2 Not a Mountain Tune, certainly! (5,4)
3 One might lead through them, but you might need 2½ packs to find such. (7)
4 The King of Beasts around is a sort of what lovers love to arrange. (7)
6 In the case of the writer, a tendency to repeat? (7)
7 and 1 across Letters from such as London, Paris and Rome? (5,8)
8 Descriptive of the old villain—since this type isn't supposed to ruh. (4-4)
9 Where some take the waters, with a little writing which could be shaky. (6)
16 Ditch-diggers have a meal off them. (9)
17 See 10 across
19 Like hothouse plants in the potting row nearby, and some nails, too! (7)
20 Pinafore's markings are placed inside where few men would be expected to be found. (6)
21 Minute makeup for those backing up? (7)
22 Singularly kingly accompaniment, according to title. (7)
23 Against poetry, by the sound of it, almost? (6)
25 His lamp, without a measure of strength, has many followers. (5)

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